



FINAL COPY

MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

FOR

**FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCE IN TRANSITIONING ENVIRONMENTS
(FORESITE) PROJECT**

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By:

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It is our hope that this report meets the requirements of the terms of reference and will inform improvement of the remaining project implementation period and also learning during the course of the project by World Vision South Sudan, NRC and AVSI foundation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVSI	:	Association of Volunteers in International Service
BCD	:	Boma Development Committees
CAMP	:	Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan
CFA	:	Cash for Asset
CIS	:	Community Information System
COVID	:	Corona Virus Disease
CSI	:	Coping Strategy Index
DFAT	:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	:	Department for International Development
DRR	:	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	:	European Union
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization
FG	:	Farmer Group
FHH	:	Female Headed Households
FMNR	:	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FORESITE	:	Food Security and Resilience in Transitioning Environments
FSTP	:	Food Security Thematic Programme
GBeG	:	Greater Bahr el Ghazal
GE	:	Gogrial East
GPS	:	Global Positioning System
HARD	:	Hope Agency for Relief and Development
HHs	:	Households
HLP	:	Housing Land and Property (HLP)
ICLA	:	Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance
IDPs	:	Internally Displaced Persons
IGA	:	Income Generating Activities
ITT	:	Indicator Tracking Table
KIIs	:	Key informant interviews
MEAL	:	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MHH	:	Male Headed Households
MSCS	:	Most significant change stories
MTE	:	Mid-term Evaluation
NRC	:	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	:	Natural Resource Management
PDM	:	Post-Distribution Monitoring
S4T	:	Savings for Transformation
SERS	:	Subjective Evaluated Resilience Score
SGDs	:	Small group discussions
SORUDEV	:	South Sudan Rural Development Programme
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSP	:	South Sudanese pound
TAs	:	Technical Assistants
TVET	:	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNIDO	:	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USD	:	United States dollar
VSO	:	Volunteer Service Overseas
WHO	:	World Health Organisation
WV	:	World Vision South Sudan
ZEAT	:	Zonal Effort for Agricultural Transformation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) Report for the Food security and Resilience in Transitioning Environments (FORESITE) in Greater Bahr El Ghazal in Republic of South Sudan. This project is implemented in four counties namely; Cueibet in Lakes state, Gogrial East and Twic in Warrap state and Jur River in Western Bahr El Ghazal State. The implementation of the project started in July 2019 and ends in March 2023. The project is funded by European Union (EU) and being implemented by a consortium of international development partners comprising World Vision South Sudan (WVSS), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) South Sudan and Association of Volunteers Service International (AVSI) South Sudan. The overall goal for the project is to contribute to strengthening resilience of communities, improving governance and conflict prevention and reducing forced displacements due to loss of livelihoods. The specific objective of the project is “To improve food security of rural smallholders in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and to empower them to cope with environmental volatility and insecurity”. The goal is to be achieved through three interrelated outcomes; Reduced barriers to engagement in resilience building, food security and income generating activities, especially for women and youth (Outcome 1); Increased anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict (Outcome 2) and Improved and resilient food security and income especially for women and youth (Outcome 3).

The MTE was commissioned by the consortium in July 2021. The main purpose of the MTE was to evaluate project’s achievements and progress towards meeting the objectives and targets and to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project to date. The evaluation also sought to generate recommendations for any adjustments necessary to ensure the project achieves its intended results effectively, with impact and sustainably. The data collection took place from July 14th to August 2nd, 2021. At total of 1785 persons (male=800; female=985) participated in the mid-term evaluation. Evaluation data was collected using structured interviews, small group discussions with beneficiaries, key informant interviews and document review. Quantitative data (N=1710) for the MTE was combined with Baseline survey (N=1681) into one data set to aid comparison of indicator values between the two samples. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) while content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The main findings from FORESITE mid-term evaluation are presented hereunder:

a. Project Implementation Progress

Overall, there has been commendable progress in execution of the project by the consortium. Commendable progress has been made in implementation of project activities as summarised in the Detailed Implementation Plan and summarised in terms of outputs (refer to Appendix 4 for details). A minimum achievement rate of 50% for each output is considered good and acceptable at the mid-term point of the project. Out of the 25 output targets for the project, 72% or 18 outputs had achievement rates above 50%. Furthermore, analysis revealed that nine targets or 36% of the 25 (nine outputs) were completed as evidenced by achievement rate of 100%. Overall, the project has higher chances of delivering all set output targets by the end of its life span. Outcome 2 had the best performance in terms of achievement of outputs, with all outputs reaching achievement rates greater than 50%. This was followed by Outcome 1, with 71% of its outputs with an achievement rate of at least 50%. Outcome 3 had 58% of its planned outputs having achievement rates which were at least 50%. In absolute terms, outcome three had the highest number of outputs (seven outputs), followed by Outcome 2 (six outputs) and outcome 1 having the least (five outputs) with at least 50% completion rate.

b. Progress towards Specific Objective

The specific objective of FORESITE project is to improve food security of rural smallholders in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and to empower them to cope with environmental volatility and insecurity. Evidence from the MTE shows good progress on two targets under this specific objective with exception to one target, where progress has been slow. For example, the percentage of households in moderate or severe food insecurity reduced from 51.1% (MHH=49.4%, FHH=57.1%) at baseline to 28.8% (MHH=28.2%; FHH=31.0%) at MTE. This reflects a 23.1% ((MHH=-21.2%, FHH=-26.1%) reduction in comparison to the target of 21.8%. This translates into a 105% performance, showing an achievement of the target. The reduction was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, 3391)=189.08, P<.001$ with a small effect size of 0.236. The project has also contributed to reducing the coping strategy from 29.2 (MHH=29.8; FHH=30.2) to 22.3 (MHH=20.9; FHH=23.3) between the baseline and MTE respectively. This translates into a reduction of 7.6 in comparison to the target of 5.9, reflecting a 105% achievement rate with a very large effect size of 8.5. The good performance was attributed to project activities which influence key variables affecting food security (incomes, food production) and gender mainstreaming in project implementation. Female beneficiaries seem to have been more receptive to project activities (mother gardens) than their male counterparts. This has allowed female beneficiaries to benefit more from the project than their male counterparts. However, subjectively evaluated resilience score (SERS) reduced from 14.3% to 5.5%, reflecting a decline of 9% between the two periods. The decline in percentage of households who were fully resilient was statistically significant with a small negative effect size, $\chi^2(2, 3391) = 78.407, P<.001$). This reduction is attributed to the nature of perceptions at the time of the MTE. Exogenous factors, such as increased inflation and depreciation of local currency, cattle raiding by neighbouring communities and anticipated risks (delayed on-set of rain) also negatively impacted subjective resilience.

Outcome 1: Reduced barriers to engagement in resilience building, food security and income generating activities, especially for women and youth

In comparison to other outcomes, Outcome 1 has the slowest progress. Progress towards its three targets is mixed, with one target above 50%, another at 36% and one regressed. Specifically, the percentage change in measure of likelihood of traditional court rulings on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) being made in a woman's favour of women increased from 62% at baseline to 69.5% at endline. This translates into a 7.5% level of improvement in comparison to the target of 13% level of improvement (58% achieved). The increase was statistically significant and with very small effect size, $\chi^2(1)=21.43, P<.001$. The percentage of respondents who feel that their community is a safe place for men and youth increased from 54% to 57.6%, reflecting a statistically significant increase of 4% between the baseline and endline, $\chi^2(1)=30.37, P<.001$. However, there was a statistically significant reduction in percentage of respondents who believe that most of their friends and community members currently agree with key gender attitude statements (High gender equity attitudes), declining to 1.8% at MTE from 6.9% at baseline (reduced by 5.1%). However, there was an increase to 95.3% at MTE from 89.4% at baseline in percentage of respondents who had moderate equity attitudes. This analysis suggests that the project is changing gender attitudes among beneficiaries and public officials to support actions which support women. However, community and non-beneficiary level gender attitudes are yet to be impacted. These levels still embrace the highly patriarchal attitudes towards women. There is need for strategies which tackle negative gender attitudes at community level and among indirect project beneficiaries in this regard.

Outcome 2: Increased anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict

There was good progress towards achieving the above outcome. Two of the four targets (social cohesion and use of early warning systems) were edging towards desired levels of improvement and one (savings and disbursements) was at 43%. Only one indicator on conflict had regressed, though the decrease was not statistically significant. The percentage of households reporting good social cohesion increased from 60.2% at baseline to 76.9% at MTE, reflecting a statistically significant difference of 16%, $\chi^2(1)=109.77$,

$P < .001$. The change translated into an 84% achievement of the set target of 19% improvement. Similarly, the proportion of households who demonstrate knowledge and use of Early Warning Systems and know what to do in case of an emergency or disaster also significantly increased by 11.8% between the baseline of 10.5% and MTE of 22.3%, $\chi^2(1)=109.77$, $P < .001$. The 11.8% reduction translated into an 81.2% achievement of the set target of 25%. Beneficiaries mobilized an average of South Sudan Pounds (SSP) 8,639.28 (USD 14.40) in comparison to the project target of SSP 20,000. This is approximately 43% of the target. However, the % of households reporting a reduction in incidents/conflicts had somewhat remained stagnant with a slight but insignificant reduction between the baseline (26.1%) and MTE (29.1%), $\chi^2(1)=3.99$, $P > .025$. On the other hand, AVSI/Cueibet reported a statistically significant reduction in percentage of households reporting reduction of conflict, $\chi^2(1)=7.039$, $P=0.008$. The peace committees and youth led clubs in cattle camps in Cueibet were playing a positive role in resolving conflicts in communities. In other communities, conflicts were fuelled by actors outside project targeted communities.

Outcome 3: Improved longer-term food security and income especially for women and youth.

Outcome 3 is the best performing in comparison to other two outcomes. All performance targets have an achievement rate above 50%. In fact, three of the targets have been achieved with remaining one target at 59.9%. The median income increased from USD 62 at baseline to USD 110.1 at MTE, reflecting an increase of USD48.1 compared to the target of USD 18.2. This reflects an achievement rate of 265% of the desired level of improvement and a change of 77% compared to the target of 30%. The increase of incomes among persons with disabilities was fourfold (364.5%) in between the baseline (USD 52.42) and mid-term (USD 191.05). The overall improvement in incomes was attributed to sale of vegetables during the dry season, and the earning of incomes from micro-enterprises set-up using loans from Savings for Transformation (S4T) groups. The real value for money arising from increase in incomes was however affected by poor macro-economic situation in South Sudan which was characterized by extremely high local currency depreciation and hyperinflation in the second year of the project. While income captured in USD increased by three folds (265%) that captured in SSP increased by more than twelve-fold (1186%). The difference represents the loss in value of local currency.

There has been remarkable improvement in agricultural production. Average production of sorghum produced per beneficiary household significantly increased by 178% between the baseline of 0.355MT to 0.987MT at MTE, $t(1432.309)=10.101$, $P < 0.001$). This increase is more than four times the desired improvement of 0.145MT over the life of the project. Similarly, groundnut production significantly increased by 74% between the baseline of 0.287MT and MTE of 0.5MT in comparison to the 40% increase, $t(1661.909)=8.340$, $P < .001$. Overall, there was a very significant increase in the percentage of women and men reporting improved access to inputs needed for income generation from the baseline of 38.4% to 67.6% at MTE, $\chi^2=64.070$, $P < .001$. Crop production was directly attributed to increased timely access to agricultural inputs, acquisition and application of improved farming practices (including ox ploughs) due to beneficiary participation in trainings and demonstration gardens, and access to seeds. Their participation in such activities empowered farmers with knowledge on improved farming practice, whose application accounts for impressive increase in crop production.

c. Efficiency

The consortium has efficiently undertaken implementation of the project. Efficiency enhancing approaches have been adopted to ensure implementation costs are minimised and targeted beneficiaries are reached. Costs have been minimized through cost sharing on major inputs (ploughs) and seed multiplication approach resulting into serving more beneficiaries compared to provision of free inputs to every beneficiary. For example, due to cost sharing, the current number of beneficiaries for ploughs doubled the number that would be reached without cost sharing. Evaluation results revealed that the project budget/financial resources were adequate and the high level of execution of the implementation of work

plan mirrors adherence to timelines. The turnover of Government officials and delayed recruitment of national staff did affect coordination and implementation of some activities.

d. Relevance

FORESITE is overwhelmingly relevant in addressing critical needs of the community. The project response to building resilience endears it to stakeholders. This is confirmed by very high favourable rating among such stakeholders. For example, 82.6% (Male=84.9%, Female=80.8%) of beneficiaries affirmed that the project addressed key problems. In addition, the project adapted well to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and continued the occurrence of periodical flooding during rainy seasons. The initial suspension of physical contact activities and adoption of standard operating measures enabled the project to continue implementation without endangering communities. Emphasis on early planting has also circumvented destruction of crops, to some extent, by flooding.

The project also contributes to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals number two (zero hunger) and five (gender equality). Zero hunger is prioritised by the Government of South Sudan. The project contributes to South Sudan strategies for World Food Programme (2018-2023), Food and Agriculture Organisation (2019-2021) and UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (2021) objectives of building resilience. Project locations also remain suitable for the project and the project remains very relevant as two counties (Cueibet & Gogrial East) belong to emergency category and another two (Jur River and Twic) belong to crisis category as per the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report (October 2020 to July 2021).

e. Project Implementation Process

The project has been well implemented. The consortium approach involving agencies with decades of humanitarian and development work with special competences has been a catalyst to high quality implementation and good progress towards achievement of project outcomes. The EU has readily availed funds to the lead partner (WVSS), which in turn remits funds to other consortium members (AVSI and NRC). The project coverage is appropriate as the right profile of communities and beneficiaries were being reached by the project. The beneficiary population has different categories of vulnerable groups which are eligible for support and participation. This profile include: 55% of beneficiaries who were female while 45% were male; 3.2% were disabled; 27.1% were from female headed households; 72.6% never attained any formal education; 84.3% were small holder farmers; 12% were landless and 5% were IDPs/returnee households.

Overall, 92.9% (female=93.0%, male=92.8%) of the project beneficiaries were satisfied with project outputs while 7.1% were not, signifying high quality implementation of the project.

f. Project Learning

The consortium has established different frameworks, processes, and strategies to track project implementation. There were enough processes and tools which track implementation and generate learning to improve project implementation. The use of MEAL working group as platform for learning has been helpful as emerging lessons learnt are shared and solutions are sought for challenges which can affect project success. The monitoring has in the past concentrated on tracking outputs and activities and with the Most Significant Change story documentation being the only avenue for results-based monitoring. Structured monitoring of outcome targets has been limited to post-harvest distribution surveys.

g. Integration and Complementarity with other EU funded Projects

Overall, the collaboration with other EU partners is not systematic among all partners (excluding NRC) and well managed, though there are some efforts to start a coordination platform. This should have been considered at project inception. WVSS and AVSI can take cue from NRC approach.

h. Project Visibility

Overall, the project has a very effective visibility plan demonstrating the presence of the project and its contributions towards addressing resilience in targeted communities. Visibility activities and means have included erecting signposts with EU emblem and logos of consortium members at key project activity sites; displaying project banners at all project events and ensuring that all materials (including publications, T-shirts) have EU emblem and logos of the three partners.

i. Sustainability of Project Results

The project has ensured different approaches and activities aimed at sustaining project support and benefits within the community. The approaches reasonably address financial, institutional, policy-level, and environmental sustainability of the project. Once fully implemented will contribute to building long term sustainability of benefits from the project beyond receipt of services and benefits after closure of the project. Key impressive sustainability approaches and practices include cost sharing of ploughs between the project and farmers; linking input dealers to farmers; strengthening of the Saving for Transformation (S4T) groups and mobilizing high value of savings and extending credit to farmers; strengthening all policy structures (Boma and Payam Development Committees) and community groups to continue to deliver services to households. As the project embarks on the second half of implementation, there is need to follow through all sustainability measures specified in the design document and develop an exit plan to guide proper phase-out of project support.

j. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, FORESITE's theory of change remains relevant for attainment of project objectives. There is commendable performance on outcomes for improving objective resilience (food security and incomes) and addressing barriers affecting anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict. There is strong internal coherence of the project logic in terms of interventions directly contributing to different outputs and outcomes. Barriers related to gender are being tackled at different levels, with changes being noticed among directly targeted power holders such as traditional courts. However, change in gender attitudes in the wider community and subjective resilience are slow but may emerge as the project gravitates towards full implementation. Consortium partners should continue to execute the project implementation plan. In order to strengthen and improve project performance, the following actions are recommended.

The EU and consortium partners should focus on supporting or designing long term and multi-year resilience building interventions in communities in South Sudan to strategically build resilience and ensure long term sustainability of results.

All consortium partners should deliberately seek collaboration with existing EU partners and also identify and make use of assets and connections left behind by previous EU funded interventions in targeted communities.

It is recommended that consortium partners should carry out regular results monitoring with focus on specific objective and outcome indicator targets to gauge progress and take any corrective measures for better performance of the project by end of its lifespan. Gender and subjective resilience indicators should be closely monitored and reported to ensure that strategies are relevant, activities are effective and desired improvements are being registered.

In future projects, there is a need to set well-reasoned and informed outcome targets to match with efforts and resources involved. Special attention should be paid to desired effect sizes in comparison to the desired level of performance. Data will be required on intervention measures at inception in comparison to anticipated level of change, including corresponding levels of variations for continuous measures.

There is need for consortium partners to review approaches being used to cultivate positive gender attitudes among targeted beneficiaries and communities. A constant reflection is required on how negative gender attitudes and perceptions can be effectively influenced and changed to engender positive supportive environment for protection and empowerment of women in targeted communities. Lessons learnt around making traditional courts more supportive of women issues may be valuable in this reflection.

The project should continuously undertake a conflict mapping and scanning of communities to appropriately intervene and ensure that occurrence of conflicts is minimised. While small misunderstandings in the community may not affect large areas, they have a very high negative impact on perceptions about peace within the community.

The project should partner with other agencies to provide brief economic updates to beneficiary groups to enable them take appropriate decisions regarding micro-borrowing, investment in micro-businesses and minimise losses occasioned by hyperinflation and extremely high local depreciations against the US dollar.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This is a midterm evaluation report for Food Security and Resilience in Transitioning Environments (FORESITE). This chapter of the report presents information on project description, purpose of the mid-term evaluation and the report structure.

I.1 Project Description

The Food security and Resilience in Transitioning Environments (FORESITE) project is a 44-months project that runs from July 2019 to March 2023. The project is financed by the European Union with the aim of addressing many of the immediate, underlying and basic causes of low resilience in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, taking into consideration the institutional and policy context of South Sudan. The primary purpose is to enable 21,826 rural smallholders improve their food security and empower them to cope with environmental volatility and insecurity.

The FORESITE project asserts that conflict directly undermines livelihoods and resilience through its effects on people's assets, on the systems upon which their livelihoods depend, even directly on their ability to reach their fields safely. Therefore, FORESITE has been working towards peace building and gender equality goals not only as key enabling factors for food security and livelihoods, but also as vital and essential goals for this context in their own right. In any community, peace and equity are the corner stones of local economic, social and cultural development. On a related note, women's position on the lower rung of South Sudanese society is illustrated and compounded by different factors such as high illiteracy rates, early and forced marriage, lesser access to information and resources, inequitable gender division of labour, and limited participation in decision making. The project therefore puts women empowerment at the centre of its activities in order to reduce barriers to engagement of women in resilience building, food security and income generating activities.

FORESITE aligns with the Government of South Sudan's Comprehensive Agricultural Development Master Plan (CAMP), which sets out the country's framework for agricultural development and contributes to the CAMP goals by supporting Households in the project locations to recover from the shocks experienced due to violent conflict, improve their food production and strengthen their livelihoods. The project has been working closely with government such as the County Agriculture Department in executing its mandate to provide extension services to the community, as well as with traditional structures in their dispute resolution and natural resource management capacity. The action is also aligned with and leverage concurrent and recent investments in Greater Bahr el Ghazal (GBeG,) particularly EU investments in rural development and food security (SORUDEV, ZEAT BEAD, and FSTP), as well as in health, education, and complementary humanitarian actions.

The overall objective of this action is to contribute to strengthening resilience of communities, improving governance and conflict prevention and reduced forced displacements due to loss of livelihoods. The specific objective is to improve food security of rural smallholders in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and to empower them to cope with environmental volatility and insecurity. This will be achieved through the following expected results:

1. Reduced barriers to engagement in resilience building, food security and income generating activities, especially for women and youth;
2. Increased anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict; and
3. Improved longer-term food security and income especially for women and youth. The action targets both smallholder farmer households (primarily through Farmer Groups) and more vulnerable households (landless, female-headed, IDPs/returnees), with the intent to "balance the vulnerable with

the viable.” More capable farmer groups, consisting of smallholder farmers, will be targeted with intensive support in order to “launch” them to high-volume, market-oriented production, stabilizing community-level food availability. More vulnerable households are being supported primarily through CFA, reducing negative externality-causing coping behaviours and creating demand for FG-produced food.

The community as a whole is being targeted with activities supporting an enabling environment, including action for gender equality, peace building, natural resource management, and promotion of resilience knowledge, attitudes and practices. Additional target groups include agricultural input and value chain workers; mothers/caregivers; traditional and statutory local government; and local peace organisations. Implementation is targeting the following 9 Payams across former Lakes, Warrap, and Western Bahr el Ghazal States:

Table 1: Projection Locations by Agency

State	County	Payam - Bomas	Agency
Lakes	Cueibet	Cueibet Payam - Achol-malek boma and Mediit boma. Abiriu Payam - Billing-angeer boma. Mayath Payam -Abinjanai boma. Duony Payam - Barieth boma. Pagor Payam - Bach boma. Malou-pec Payam - Langdit boma and Malou-pec boma. Ngap Payam - Angangrial boma.	AVSI
Warrap	Gogrial East	Pathoun East – Anger-nger and Mayom-Biong	WVSS
		Toch West – Malual Awien and Tarweng	WVSS
	Twic	Wunrok – Abek and Tiitchok	WVSS
		Turalei – Nyiel Abiel and Ayien	NRC
		Aweng – Maper and Pagai	NRC
Western Bahr el Ghazal	Jur River	Marial Baai – Maluil and Marial Baai	NRC
		Udici – Alei thony Kangi and Udici	NRC

Project summary

Below is a summary of the project’s overall objectives and results.

Impact: To contribute to strengthening resilience of communities, improving governance and conflict prevention and reducing forced displacements due to loss of livelihoods.

Specific Objective: To improve food security of rural smallholders in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and to empower them to cope with environmental volatility and insecurity.

Outcomes

- Outcome 1: Reduced barriers to engagement in resilience building, food security and income generating activities, especially for women and youth
- Outcome 2: Increased anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict.
- Outcome 3: Improved and resilient food security and income especially for women and youth

Outputs

- I.1. Institutions, communities and individuals have access to knowledge and skills to practice more gender equitable relations and support a more gender equitable enabling environment;
- I.2. Community-based groups and actors have the opportunities and capacity to identify and pursue peace building strategies;

- 2.1 Communities plan, deliver and maintain communal assets which enhance local resilience and livelihoods;
- 2.2 Local institutions lead inclusive, conflict-sensitive NRM, DRR and land use planning;
- 2.3 HHs have access to savings and loans and social networks, and knowledge of positive coping strategies;
- 3.1 FGs intensify and diversify sustainable and market-oriented agricultural production of nutritious food;
- 3.2 Increased and diversified income generating activities especially for women and youth

Target groups

FORESITE targets the following groups in the aforementioned project operational areas:

- i) Smallholder farmer households primarily through Farmer Groups [more capable FGs have been targeted with intensive support in order to “launch” them to high-volume, market-oriented production, stabilizing community-level food availability] and;
- ii) Vulnerable households (landless, female-headed, IDPs/returnees), with the intent to “balance the vulnerable with the viable.” The community as a whole has been targeted with activities supporting an enabling environment, including action for gender equality, peace building, natural resource management, and promotion of resilience knowledge, attitudes and practices. Additional target groups include agricultural input and value chain workers; mothers/caregivers; traditional and statutory local government; and local peace organizations.

1.2 Purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The main purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was to evaluate project achievements and progress towards meeting the objectives and targets and to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project to date. The evaluation will also generate recommendations for any adjustments necessary to ensure the project will achieve intended results effectively, with impact and sustainably. The independent mid-term evaluation of FORESITE will generate detailed information about the project implementation process and results to date. The information will be used for public presentations and learning, for sharing with government counterparts, local stakeholders and private sector partners, and for promotion of services in the community, as well as identifying possibilities for project replication. The results from the independent evaluation will also support the consortium members’ agency-level learning, by documenting and explaining why planned activities succeeded or failed.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) Report has been presented in four chapters. Chapter one presents project description purpose of the mid-term evaluation and structure of the report. Chapter two presents the methodology followed when conducting the evaluation. Chapter three presents the key findings from the mid-term Evaluation. The last chapter of the report presents conclusions and key recommendations that can be used by World Vision South Sudan and its partners to improve project performance over the remaining project timeframe. Key supportive documents (such as bridged terms of reference; copies of data collection tools and a copy of the evaluation matrix/plan for the mid-term evaluation) have been attached in the appendices of the report.

CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the report presents information on evaluation design, data sources, sample size and sampling design, data collection methods, data processing, management and analysis, quality control measures and factors facilitating or limiting execution of the evaluation. Details on each of the aspects has been presented hereunder:

2.1 Mid-term Evaluation Design

A mixed evaluation design was used to conduct the mid-term evaluation of FORESITE project. This design involved a before-and-after evaluation design and one-shot evaluation design (case study design). Details of each design are provided hereunder:

a) Pre-Post Evaluation design

This evaluation design involved determining the magnitude and direction of benefits (impacts/effects) on project beneficiaries. The performance indicators as defined in the project Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Plan were used to measure the magnitude and direction of benefits. This was done by comparing the status of the indicator at the start of the project (baseline) and the status of the indicators during the mid-term evaluation. The difference was either positive, negative or constant depending on the extent to which the project intervention activities had translated into results (benefits) and level of influence of external factors on the targeted beneficiaries. Independent Samples T-tests and Pearson Chi-square tests have been conducted to gauge whether any observed difference in outcome indicators were statistically significant. In addition, effect sizes (phi and Cohen's *d*) have been computed and presented to determine the programmatic importance of observed effects.

A variance analysis at the level of indicator targets and outputs was carried out to provide answers to issues of assessing the extent to which the project had realised its performance targets. This will be done by computing the difference between actual and planned targets. This computation yielded completion rates (out of 100%) and variances. Project indicators which were in the lower neighbourhood of 100 percent were interpreted as perfect performance and judged to be having high chances of accomplishment. Project indicators which were exceeding 100% were interpreted as exceptional performance by project implementers. In terms of variance, a negative variance meant under-performance; positive variance was interpreted to mean exceptional performance or exceeding targets. A zero performance meant perfect performance.

b) One-shot Evaluation Design

This design was used to assess issues which had no baseline figures. These issues included; project relevance, sustainability, lessons learned, recommendations, visibility, timeliness, reach, quality, complementarity, harmonization and some elements of efficiency, effectiveness and impact. This design was also used to generate qualitative data especially on factors that explain the nature of level of project achievements. Qualitative methodologies such as small group discussions, key informant interviews and most significant change stories were used to generate data on evaluation variables stated under this design.

The above evaluation designs were executed through a detailed evaluation matrix/plan presented in appendix 2.

2.2 Data Sources

The evaluation utilised both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources entailed; beneficiaries that were surveyed and other programme key stakeholders such as government officials, project staff, agro-input dealers, local leaders and agencies implementing EU funded projects in different areas. The secondary data included; grant agreement, baseline survey report, assessment data/reports,

case studies (success stories), annual donor report, project detailed implementation plan, MEAL plan and logical framework, project financial reports and documentation, project support folders that include forms used for data collection, documentation systems, and procedures (MEAL tools) and inputs provision modalities.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Design

A total of 1785 respondents participated in the mid-term evaluation. This sample size comprises a total of 1,710 beneficiary households and a qualitative sample of 75 participants.

2.3.1 Quantitative Sample Size for Beneficiary Household Survey

The quantitative sample size for beneficiary household was determined using the formula below:

Formula for Computing Sample size (The Slovin's Formula)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} + U$$

Where:

e=Margin of error of +/-2.5%

N= Households (21,826 smallholder households)

n= the determined total sample size=1640 smallholder households

U=Provision for Non-Response cases estimated at 10% of the sample with 100% response rate.

As per our formula, the beneficiary smallholder household sample size was estimated at 1640. Some extra 70 households were sampled. Based on this, the overall evaluation sample was 1710.

Table 2: Distribution of the Sample by County and Partner

Partner	Counties	Sample
AVSI	Cueibet	529
World Vision	Gogrial East	438
World Vision	Twic	232
NRC	Twic	249
NRC	Jur River	262
Total		1710

Sampling of Smallholder Households for Survey

The MTE followed the sampling procedure used during the baseline survey. Accordingly, the MTE attempted to interview the same beneficiaries interviewed during the baseline survey. The same baseline survey sampling frame was adopted for the MTE. The MTE managed to trace and interview only 31.3% or 535 beneficiaries who participated in the baseline survey. This was below the anticipated target of 80% to support extraction of a large panel data set to support a panel design. In addition, traced beneficiaries were mainly from AVSI (69.9%) and much lower for NRC (14.3%) and WVSS (14.0%). This unbalanced sample between partners could not support a panel design and analysis of programme beneficiaries across different partners. Where baseline survey respondents were not accessible for interviews, they were replaced using simple random sampling technique from the same groups on the sampling frame. The sampling frame for the mid-term evaluation was a list of project beneficiaries organised in groups by AVSI, NRC and WVSS. The beneficiary groups included: farmers, Savings for Transformation (S4T), Farmer Groups, mother garden groups and those that belonged to more two of these groups.

2.3.2 Qualitative Sample Size

A total of 75 persons participated in Small Group Discussions (SGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories. Among these participants, 48 of them participated in 9 small

group discussions (SGD) while 19 participated in 14 key informant interviews and 8 participated in most significant change stories. Of the total number of SGDs, KIIs and MSCs participants, 42 were female while 33 were male. The composition of the qualitative sample is presented in the table below:

Table 3: Composition of Qualitative Sample

Respondent Category	Data Collection Tools	Number of FGDs/KIIs	Number of Participants	Sampling Method
Farmers	SGD Guide	2	10	Purposive
Farmers' leaders	SGD Guide	4	19	Purposive
Youth	SGD Guide	1	7	Purposive
Peace Committee	SGD Guide	1	3	Purposive
TVET Trainees	SGD Guide	1	9	Purposive
Project staff	KII Guide	5	8	Purposive
EU Technical Assistance Staff	KII Guide	1	1	Purposive
Local Leaders	KII Guide	3	4	Purposive
S4T leaders	KII Guide	2	3	Purposive
GoSS official	KII Guide	1	1	Purposive
Agro input dealers	KII Guide	1	1	Purposive
Staff for organization implementing EU funded projects	KII Guide	1	1	Purposive
Most Significant Change Stories	MSCS Guide	8	8	Purposive
Total Sample			75	

Sampling of Participants for Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative interview participants were purposively selected basing on the level of participation and knowledge on the project issues that were studied. Key stakeholders such as; project beneficiaries, local leaders, government officials, project group leaders, project staff, agro input dealers and staff of other agencies implementing EU funded projects were selected using this sampling technique.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

Data for the mid-term project evaluation was collected using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods which are indicated hereunder:

a) Beneficiary survey: Quantitative primary data for the MTE was collected from beneficiaries using a beneficiary survey method. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered to project beneficiaries in targeted locations. The structured questionnaire was administered to 1710 project beneficiaries by trained enumerators through face-to-face interviews in local languages understood by beneficiaries. The structured questionnaire for project beneficiaries was developed in conformity with project indicators and other applicable evaluation issues as per project logical framework and terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation. The MTE Beneficiary Questionnaire was programmed and deployed on Kobocollect to support collection of data collection using tablets. This enables us to generate quantifiable data on different project indicators and other issues that were considered important as per terms of reference.

b) Small Group Discussions (SGDs): Small Group Discussion method was used to collect primary data from project beneficiaries. Unstructured SGD guide/tool was designed and used to collect data from project beneficiaries. Unstructured SGD guide was administered to selected project beneficiaries listed under Table 2 above.

c) Interviews with Key Informant (KIs): This method was used to generate primary mid-term evaluation data from key project stakeholders that are responsible for project implementation and those

who are knowledgeable about the project. The key stakeholders who participated in these interviews included government officials, project staff, local leaders, group leaders, agro input dealers and other NGOs implementing EU funded projects. Key Informant Interview guide was developed and used to collect data from project staff as the qualitative sample subsection explained earlier under Table 2 above.

d) Interviews with outstanding beneficiaries to document most significant change stories:

This interview method was used to document most significant change stories from project implementation at midway. This was done in a consultation with project staff. These stories were documented using most significant change story guide.

e) Review of project documents: This method was also used to obtain secondary data for the mid-term project evaluation. The key documents that were reviewed included; grant agreement, baseline survey report, assessment data/reports, case studies (success stories), annual donor report, project organizational chart and position descriptions, project detailed implementation plan, MEAL plan and log frames, project financial reports and documentation, project support folders that include forms used for data collection, documentation systems, and procedures (MEAL tools, inputs provision modalities, minimum standards etc.).

2.5 Adherence to Research Ethics and Protection

There was strict adherence to basic and fundamental ethical procedures and humanitarian principles during the MTE. The adopted measures entailed:

- All enumerators were required to sign and observe WVSS child protection and safeguarding policy during the exercise;
- Securing verbal voluntary consents from targeted beneficiaries (respondents) before they participate in data collection;
- Ensuring that data is kept in a secure and confidential manner and the anonymity of respondents is protected in the presentation of findings;
- Ensuring the appropriate, safe, and non-discriminatory participation of all respondents in the survey;
- Adhering to principles of Do-No-Harm throughout the entire evaluation exercise;
- In addition, all information has been analysed and presented in aggregated form without reference to individual details of respondents. Where verbatim quotes have been used, these have been kept anonymous. The WV Team shall safely keep the data to ensure the dataset with beneficiary details are not accessed without approval. Where the datasets are to be used, the particulars of beneficiaries (names and GPS coordinates) shall be removed.
- Different measures were instituted to prevent COVID-19 infections. Such measures included provision of information on the epidemic during the training, availing of masks to evaluation team and wearing them, social distancing, 10 day quarantining of international consultant in Juba and hand-washing/sanitising were adopted to prevent any risky behaviours that would expose evaluation participants, including communities, to COVID-19 infections.

2.6 Quality Assurance Plan

A number of quality assurance were instituted during the process of the mid-term evaluation. These measures were:

- Validation of draft data collection tools by quality assurance manager and project director;
- Use of smart phones that played important role in regulating quality of data. The structured questionnaire was programmed in such a way that necessary skips and mandatory questions are included to minimize non-response/missing cases;
- Working with field staff and quality assurance team to coordinate data collection exercises;

- Recruitment of enumerators that had prior experience in data collection and minimum education of a diploma level or an equivalent with accumulated experience in data collection to enhance quality of data collected;
- Training of enumerators to ensure that they are conversant with and properly use data collection tools in order to enhance quality of data collected;
- Pre-testing of data collection tools to detect errors and fine tune them in order to enhance quality of data collection instruments so that they aid in collecting of actual data that is meant to be collected;
- Reviewing pre-test data as team to ensure that all errors containing in the tools are raised and worked on;
- Daily supervision, guidance and feedback to research assistants involved in data collection in order to minimize errors in data collected;
- Reviewing filled questionnaires of enumerators by consultants and M&E team at the end of every day to ensure completeness and content accuracy before they are uploaded onto the server;
- Subjecting the draft report to internal review in line with KENWILL's consulting standards;
- Working closely with World Vision South Sudan and partners' team at critical stages of the evaluation such as inception report, recruiting and training of enumerators, data collection and reviewing and addressing all feasible comments on draft report;

2.7 Data Processing, Management and Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for processing and analysing beneficiary survey data. Microsoft Excel spread sheets complemented SPSS in data analysis. The beneficiary survey data was collected using Kobo mobile data collection Application that was installed on smart phones and there after a structured questionnaire was downloaded. At the end of every day of data collection, beneficiary survey data would be sent to the server. After completing data collection process, data was downloaded from the server. After downloading data into Microsoft Excel file, data was imported into SPSS where activities like defining variables, labelling variables and cleaning of data was done. Data cleaning was done to ensure that data is in readiness for analysis. In addition, data cleaning was done by performing preliminary analysis of data where errors were identified and rectified accordingly. After data cleaning, data was analysed to generate different descriptive and inferential statistics, frequencies and visual impressions which aided in report writing as per the indicator measurement plan presented in Appendix 7.

In addition, qualitative data for the mid-term evaluation was analysed using content analysis approach. Processing of qualitative data collected from key informants and small group discussions involved typing of field notes into computers using Microsoft Word software. This analysis involved grouping similar data together under similar themes and sub-themes of evaluation, summarising or reducing similar grouped data, interpreting and attaching meanings to reduced data, noting discrepancies of data collected by different methods and from different respondents making comparisons of qualitative with quantitative data.

2.8 Factors that Facilitated or Hindered Execution of the Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation was successfully conducted as per the evaluation plan. Different factors facilitated successful execution of this evaluation. These factors entailed; proper coordination of data collection by WVSS and Partners' staff, proper planning and management of the assignment, availability of financial resources, cooperation from targeted evaluation respondents and timely access to information for planning and report writing.

However, some challenges were encountered, though addressed to lessen their negative impact on the mid-term evaluation. These challenges included; poor roads due to heavy rainfall in Twic county, insecurity in some Payams such as Kangi and Udici and poor roads in some locations. Project cars which are in very

good conditions and experienced drivers were deployed. Data collection in Kangi and Udici was suspended as the security team monitored the situation and after the situation normalising, the enumerators were redeployed and data collection was done. In addition, more respondents were also interviewed in Marial Baai Payam.

2.9. Limitations

Quantitative data on project outcome indicators can be generalised to project Beneficiaries within a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5%. Qualitative findings on non-indicator aspects of the MTE do apply to different categories of evaluation participants. Data on income and crop production was collected through recall method and may not be tightly accurate. However, different measures have been adopted to address any short fall. Such measures have entailed ensuring the tests of homogeneity were conducted and findings were compared either for equal or unequal group variances as per such results. Some bootstrapping was done to ensure that the different measures do not include the value of zero within their confidence intervals. A triangulation of quantitative findings with past project studies (Post Distribution Monitoring results) and qualitative data has been carried out to strengthen internal validity. While MTE results are very compelling, future findings could be strengthened further with an introduction of a control group to ensure an estimation of a counterfactual or if not construct a counterfactual within targeted group if this is considered at project design stage to support a pipeline design.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION FINDINGS

This chapter of the report presents the main findings from the mid-term evaluation of the FORESITE project. The findings have been presented following the line of inquiry and mid-term evaluation purpose as indicated in the terms of reference.

3.1 Description of the MTE Sample

A total of 1785 persons participated in the mid-term evaluation. Among these, 1710 were household survey respondents while 75 were qualitative interview participants. The detailed description of different samples is provided hereunder:

a) Beneficiary Survey Respondents

Respondents per Project Partner: Overall, 1710 project beneficiaries were selected for structured interviews during the mid-term evaluation. Of these, 529 were project beneficiaries under AVSI while 670 were under WVSS and 511 under NRC.

State and county of Respondents: The mid-term evaluation was carried out from three states. These includes lakes, Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal. Of the three states, 30.9% project beneficiaries were selected from Lakes states while 53.7% from Warrap and 15.3% from Western Bahr el Ghazal. The number of sample size by county show that 30.9% respondents were sampled from Cueibet while 25.6% from Gogrial East, 28.1% from Twic and 15.3% from Jur River.

Payam of Respondents: Most of the respondents for the mid-term evaluation were selected from Pathoun East Payam (19.5%). This was followed by; Cueibet (16.7%), Abiriu (14.2%), Wunrok (13.6%), Turalei (8.9%), Marial Baai (8.7%), Kangi (6.7%), Toch West (6.1%) and Aweng (5.6%)

Sex of Respondents: Out of the total number of mid-term evaluation respondents, majority of them were female (55.1%) while 44.9% were male. Out of the total number female respondents, 62.4% were selected from Warrap state while 62.2% from Western Bahr el Ghazal and 39.1% from Lakes. Among male respondents, 60.9% were sampled from Lakes state whereas 37.8% from Western Bahr el Ghazal and 37.6% from Warrap.

Marital status of respondents: Among the sampled respondents, majority of them were married (89.1%). This was followed by those who were single (6.6%), widowed (3.7%), separated (0.5%) and divorced (0.1%). Among respondents who were married, 87.7% were male while 90.1% were female. 11.9% of male respondents were single while 2.3% were female. 6.7% of female respondents were widowed while 0.1% of male respondents were widowed. In addition, 0.1% each of male and female respondents had divorced.

Disability status of respondents: Most of the sampled respondents were not disabled (97.7%) while 2.3% (39 persons) were disabled. Out of the total number of disabled respondents, 71.8% (28) were male while 28.2% (11) were female. In addition, of the respondents who were disabled, 1.5% were physically disabled. This was followed by, deaf/dumb (0.6%), chronically ill (0.2%), visual impairment (0.1%) and mental impairment (0.1%).

Sex of household head: The mid-term findings showed that most of the households were male headed households (78.5%) while 21.5% were female headed households.

Marital status of household head: Among the household heads, most of them were married (93.2%). This was followed by household heads who were widowed (3.7%), single (2.5%), separated (0.5%) and divorced (0.1%). Lakes state had the highest percentage of households who were married than other (96.0%, Western Bahr el Ghazal=92.0% and Warrap=91.8%). In addition, Western Bahr el Ghazal state had the highest number households who were single than other states (Western Bahr el Ghazal=4.6%, Warrap=2.8% and Lakes=0.9%). Further still Warrap state had a higher number of households who were widowed than other states (Warrap=4.7%, Western Bahr el Ghazal=2.7% and Lakes=2.6%). In addition, Warrap was the only state that had a household head who had divorced (0.1%). The household heads that had separated were more in Western Bahr el Ghazal than other targeted states (Western Bahr el Ghazal=0.8%, Warrap=0.5% and Lakes=0.4%).

Highest education level of respondents: The highest level of schooling the targeted respondents had attained was assessed during the mid-term evaluation. The results showed that most of the respondents had never attended any level of education (69.7%). This was followed by those who had attained primary/basic (15.1%), secondary (7.5%), preschool (3.2%) and post-secondary (2.2%). In addition, 2.3% of the respondents did not know their highest level of schooling.

Highest education level of household head: Among the household heads, majority of them never attended any schooling level (67.8%). This was followed by those who had attained primary/basic (15.4%), secondary (8.5%), post-secondary (3.5%) and preschool (2.3%) while 2.3% did know their level of education.

Ownership of Livestock/Poultry. The mid-term evaluation findings indicated that 98.5% of project beneficiary households had livestock and poultry while 1.5% did not own any. Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal had highest number of households with livestock and poultry than Lakes state (Warrap=99.6%, Western Bahr el Ghazal=99.6% and Lakes=96.2%). Analysis of the mid-term evaluation findings by partners indicated that WVSS and NRC had majority of households that owned livestock and poultry than AVSI (WVSS=99.6%, NRC=99.6% and AVSI=96.2%)

b) Qualitative Sample Participants

A total of 75 persons participated in small group discussions, KIs and most significant change stories. Among these participants, 48 of them participated in 9 small group discussions (SGD) while 19 participated in 14 key informant interviews and 8 participated in most significant change stories. In addition, of these participants, 42 were female while 33 were male.

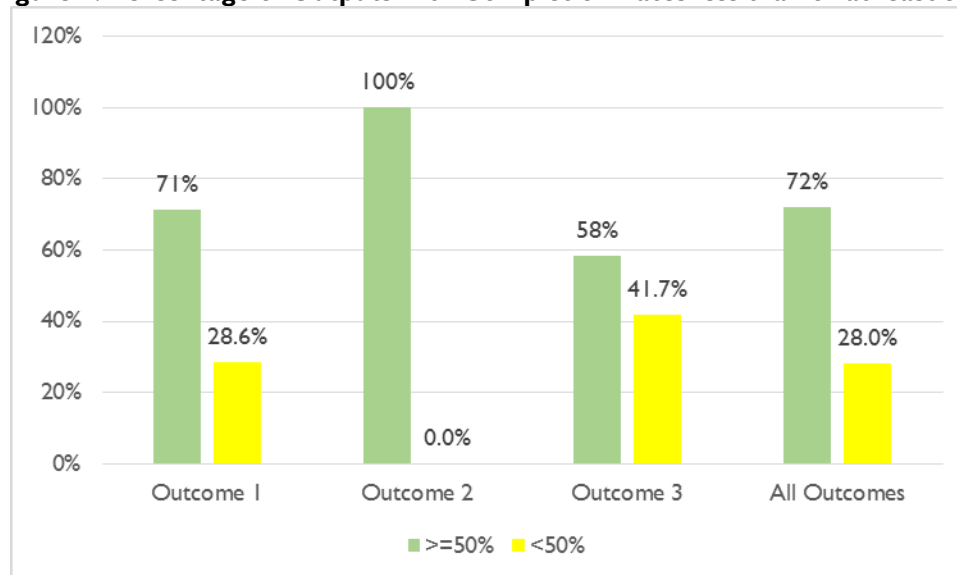
3.2 Project Achievements (Effectiveness)

3.2.1 Project Implementation Progress

Project implementation progress was assessed by measuring the extent to which planned outputs and corresponding targets have been delivered. This delivery reflects an achievement rate and is a good measure of operational efficiency and execution of the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP). With the project at mid-term, any output which is at least 50% delivered can be considered as having high likelihood of being achieved. Accordingly, achievement rates for set output targets were examined and classified as either at least 50% or less than 50% achieved. Overall, the project had 25 output targets (outcome=7; outcome 2=6; outcome 3=12) whose achievement rates are presented in the indicator summary sheet (Appendix 4). The results of analysis are presented in Figure 1. Generally, the project has a high likelihood of fully implementing the DIP and delivering on set output targets. Seventy two percent of the 25 targets or 18 targets have achievement rates of at least 50%. Some 36% of all the 25 output targets were fully delivered (100% achieved). Only 28% or seven targets were below 50%. Across outcome, Outcome 2 had all outputs with at least 50% of set targets achieved, followed by Outcome 1 (71%) and Outcome 3 (58%).

In absolute terms, outcome three has highest number of outputs (12 outputs) compared to other outcomes. Additionally, it also has the highest number of outputs with at least 50% completion/achievement rates. While in relative terms it ranks lowest, it is actually best performing in absolute terms. The higher number of outputs for outcome three and good execution has an implication on overall progress towards set outcome targets. Implementation has been facilitated by experienced leadership and management and better coordination between the three consortium partners. However, some areas (seed production, ox-plough master trainers and commissioning extension agents) where achievement rates are below 50% were attributed to scheduling of activities for the second half of the project and the slow-down of activities due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Figure 1: Percentage of Outputs with Completion Rates less than or at least 50%



3.2.2 Progress towards Project Specific objective

FORESITE Project's specific objective is to improve food security of rural smallholders in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and to empower them to cope with environmental volatility and insecurity. This will be achieved through the following expected results. Progress towards achievements of this specific objective was based on the extent to which set targets were achieved. Overall, there is strong performance on two out of the three targets. Findings are presented below:

Indicator 1: % HHs in moderate or severe food insecurity

FORESITE project target reducing the percentage of households in moderate or severe food insecurity to 30% over its lifespan. Accordingly, the MTE sought to measure the extent to which the project was progressing towards this target. A comparison of MTE and Baseline survey findings is presented in Table 4. Overall, there was reduction of 23 percentage points between the MTE (28.8%) and Baseline (51.9%) in the percentage of households in moderate or severe food insecurity. The reduction was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, 3391) = 189.08, P < .001$. The effect size of this reduction is small as measured by the phi (ϕ) of 0.236. In comparison to the project set indicator or desired level of improvement of -21.9 percentage point reduction, the project had achieved 105% of its target at mid-term. This is a very tremendous progress given the fact that the MTE data collection was carried out during the lean month (July) and slow-down of project activities (momentum) occasioned by COVID-19.

Disaggregated MTE findings also revealed that the project had made significantly remarkable progress and changes in reducing food insecurity among different categories of beneficiaries. All categories of

beneficiaries registered significant reduction in percentage of household in moderate or severe food insecurity. Some of the remarkable areas were noted in Gogrial East and Twic where medium effect sizes were observed. Similarly, the project had medium effect sizes in WVSS programme area and among youth (14-24 years). Significant reduction were also noted among persons with disabilities (effect=-21.3%, $\phi=0.208$). Small effect sizes were however noted in Cueibet/AVSI area and Jur River County. The project effect was more felt among female headed households compared to male headed households, implying female households benefited more than male headed households from project interventions.

Further analysis revealed that the improvement in CSI were largely linked to project activities. The analysis revealed that unlike at baseline (Cash transfer Beneficiaries=28.4; Non-cash transfer beneficiaries=31.8)¹ where there was no significant difference in CSI for households receiving food assistance, including cash transfers; there was no difference at endline (Cash transfer Beneficiaries=23.1; Non-cash transfer beneficiaries=23.5)², implying that the difference has been eliminated

Table 4: % HHs in moderate or severe food insecurity

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		N	Percent	N	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	44.0%	539	32.3%	-11.7%	15.279	.000	.120
	Gogrial East	438	67.6%	438	33.6%	-34.0%	101.388	.000	.340
	Twic	451	50.3%	481	21.2%	-29.1%	86.459	.000	.305
	Jur River	260	44.6%	261	27.5%	-17.1%	16.626	.000	.178
Sex of household head	Male	1131	49.4%	1342	28.2%	-21.2%	117.861	.000	.218
	Female	550	57.1%	368	31.0%	-26.1%	60.411	.000	.257
Disability status of respondent	Disabled;	71	52.1%	39	30.8%	-21.3%	4.642	.031	.205
	Not Disabled	1610	51.9%	1671	28.7%	-23.2%	183.726	.000	.237
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	45.9%	767	25.9%	-20.0%	66.866	.000	.208
	Female	906	57.1%	943	31.1%	-26.0%	126.820	.000	.262
Programme Area Lead	AVSI	532	44.0%	529	32.3%	-11.7%	15.279	.000	.120
	NRC	488	44.9%	511	24.5%	-20.4%	46.080	.000	.215
	WVSS	661	63.5%	670	29.3%	-34.2%	157.330	.000	.344
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Years	180	56.7%	196	25.0%	-31.7%	39.153	.000	.323
	≥25 years	1501	51.4%	1514	29.3%	-22.1%	153.131	.000	.225
Total		1681	51.9%	1710	28.8%	-23.1%	189.082	.000	.236

Indicator 2: Average Coping Strategies Index (CSI) score

The average Coping Strategy Index (CSI) from the MTE beneficiary survey was 22.30 compared to the baseline of 29.91 (Table 5). This translates into a mean difference of -7.61. The mean difference between the baseline and MTE was statistically significant, $t(3352.21) = -10.94$, $P < 0.001$. The corresponding effect size was $d = -8.547$, denoting a very big negative effect size of the project on this indicator. As per MTE results, the CSI of 22.30 represents an over-achievement of the project target of 23.5. This implies that the project has achieved 105% of its target. All categories of beneficiaries registered significant reduction in CSI except beneficiaries from Jur River. The analysis revealed an increase of 6.75 in CSI for beneficiary

¹ $F(1) = 3.90$, $P = .049$

² $F(1) = 0.59$, $P = .808$

in Jur River County between the baseline (24.11) and MTE (30.86). The increase or deterioration was statistically significant $t(496.46)=3.932$; $P>.001$. MTE results indicate that the project had very significant impact on use of food security coping strategies. In other words, there is less use of food security coping strategies in the project area between the MTE and Baseline. The households seem to have acquired reasonable capacity to produce or purchase enough food items and minimize or avoid resorting to negative coping strategies. This signals increased resilience of targeted farmer households in different areas. The analysis revealed increase in percentage of households consuming different food categories such vegetables (Baseline=73.2%; MTE=93.6%); pulses (Baseline=46.5%; MTE=81.8%) meat and relate products (Baseline=70.1%; MTE=81.8%); milk and milk products (Baseline=36.4%; MTE=81%) between the evaluation and endline. The project intervention directly promoted production of sorghum; vegetables (mother gardens) and pulses (groundnuts). Increased incomes enabled households to purchase some of the food items.

Jur River recorded an increase in the coping strategy index implying that household were resorting to more frequent use of food security coping strategies at the time of the MTE. This negative change was attributed to the impact of COVID on Jur River community which depend on the market in Wau for food purchases and sales. During the lockdown, Government of South Sudan instituted measures which reduced importation of commodities and reduced availability of food items in local markets. This made food prices to more than double during such periods. In addition, the local currency depreciated against the dollar from around SSP 300 to SSP 700 per USD during the three months period before the MTE³. This affected the purchasing power of household incomes and negatively affected access to food by targeted households.

Table 5: Average Coping Strategies Index (CSI) score

Category		Baseline		MTE		MD	t-stat.	P-value	Effect Size (d)
		N	Mean	N	Mean				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	35.51	539	22.67	-12.84	-9.773	.000	(6.667)
	Gogrial East	438	24.22	438	18.17	-6.05	-5.02	.000	(24.442)
	Twic	451	32.17	481	20.99	-11.18	-8.781	.000	(51.537)
	Jur River	260	24.11	261	30.86	6.75	3.932	.000	3.200
Sex of household head	Male	1131	29.77	1342	20.93	-8.84	-10.822	.000	(6.575)
	Female	550	30.19	368	27.30	-2.89	-2.121	.034	(2.467)
Disability status of respondent	Disabled;	71	38.18	39	19.15	-19.03	-4.436	.000	(8.828)
	Not Disabled	1610	29.54	1671	22.37	-7.17	-10.228	.000	(9.766)
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	31.13	767	22.29	-8.85	-8.264	.000	(5.909)
	Female	906	28.86	943	22.31	-6.55	-7.232	.000	(8.440)
Programme Area Lead	AVSI	532	35.51	529	22.67	-12.84	-9.773	.000	(6.667)
	NRC	488	28.61	511	26.53	-2.08	-1.56	.119	(1.898)
	WVSS	661	26.36	670	18.77	-7.58	-7.837	.000	(10.215)
Age Group	14-24 Yrs	180	26.54	196	21.05	-5.50	-2.726	.007	(7.293)
	≥25 Yrs	1501	30.31	1514	22.46	-7.85	.000	.000	(8.191)
Total		1681	29.91	1710	22.30	-7.61	-10.94	.000	(8.547)

³ The exchange rate for the USD ranged from 300 to 400 SSP at the time of the MTE.

Indicator 3: % change in HH subjective resilience score

The project targets increasing the percentage of households that are fully resilient⁴ to 30%. MTE results (Table 6) indicate a decline in the percentage of households that are fully resilient from 14.3% at baseline to 5.3% at MTE. This reflects a reduction of nine percentage points between the two reference points. The analysis revealed that the project is 82.5% away from its target indicator value. The decline in percentage of households who were fully resilient was statistically significant with a small negative effect size, $\chi^2 (2, 3391) = 78.407, P < 0.001$. Statistically significant reductions were noted across different categories of beneficiaries, except AVSI/Cueibet area. The analysis revealed a reduction in household resilient capacity as measured by the Subjectively Evaluated Resilience Score (SERS). An examination of the nine domains of what constitutes the SERS, revealed very significant declines or more than 20% except on political capacity which declined by just three percent. The highest reduction was on transformative capacity (-51.5%), followed by adaptive capacity (45.5%); learning (34.2%); anticipatory capacity (29.3%); early warning (28.5%); financial capacity (26.5%); social capacity (25.3%) and adoptive capacity (10.6%). As documented in its manual, SERS depends on the perceptions and prevailing feelings and thoughts of respondents. Events such as cattle raiding, delayed on-set of rain and flooding negatively affect subjective resilience attitudes of communities.

Table 6: % of Households that are Fully Resilient as measured by SERS Score

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P	Effect Size (ϕ)
		N	Percent	N	MTE				
Project Area Lead	AVSI	532	6.0%	529	8.5%	2.5%	2.447	.118	.048
	NRC	488	24.2%	511	3.3%	-20.9%	92.879	.000	-.305
	WVSS	661	13.6%	670	4.2%	-9.4%	36.673	.000	-.166
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	11.9%	765	.1	-5.1%	11.802	.001	-.087
	Female	906	16.3%	943	4.0%	-12.3%	77.338	.000	-.205
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	6.0%	529	8.5%	2.5%	2.447	.118	.048
	Gogrial East	438	16.9%	428	4.3%	-12.6%	36.390	.000	-.204
	Twic	451	5.1%	481	3.1%	-2.0%	2.336	.126	-.050
	Jur River	260	42.7%	262	4.2%	-38.5%	107.971	.000	-.455
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Yrs	180	17.8%	196	6.6%	-11.2%	11.062	.001	-.172
	≥25 Yrs	1501	13.9%	1514	5.1%	-8.8%	67.755	.000	-.150
Disability status of respondent	Disabled;	71	5.6%	39	5.1%	-0.5%	.012	.911	-.011
	Not Disabled	1610	14.7%	1671	5.3%	-9.4%	81.271	.000	-.157
Sex of household head	Male	1131	16.3%	1342	5.5%	-10.8%	75.969	.000	-.175
	Female	550	10.2%	368	4.3%	-5.9%	10.382	.001	-.106
Total		1681	14.3%	1710	5.3%	-9.0%	78.407	.000	-.152

3.2.3 Outcome 1: Reduced barriers to engagement in resilience building, food security and income generating activities, especially for women and youth

Indicator 1: % of respondents who feel that their community is a safe place for women and youth.

⁴ Fully resilient refers to households who report feeling fully resilient on the SERS Resilience capacity areas which include Absorptive capacity; Transformative capacity; adaptive capacity; Financial capital; Social capital; Political capital; Learning; Anticipatory capacity ; and Early warning (Jones, 2019).

The evaluation assessed how respondents feel about their community being a safe place for women and youth. In comparison to baseline survey findings (Table 7), the respondents who felt that their community is a safe place for women and youth increased from 53.5% to 57.6%. This translates into 4.1% increase in percentage of respondents who felt that their community is a safe place for women and youth. The analysis also showed that the difference between baseline survey and midterm evaluation is statistically significant, $\chi^2(1)=30.37$, $P<.001$. This was a very small effect, $\phi=0.095$. In terms of realisation of project target performance (65%) for this indicator, the project had realised 88.6% of its set target. In terms of achievement of desired level of improvement (11.5%), the project had achieved 35.6% of its desired level of improvement. Analysis by different variables revealed mixed results. All counties except Jur River reported significant improvement on this indicator. Other significant changes were observed among male beneficiaries; beneficiaries without disabilities; respondents from male headed households; NRC and WVSS operational areas and older beneficiaries. Increases or reductions in other categories were not statistically significant at 95% confidence level. Overall, the change in perception about the community as a safe place is happening but at slower pace. As noted, beneficiaries from female headed households felt unsafe, implying that this aspect is heavily influenced by gender vulnerabilities of women in highly patriarchal communities.

Table 7: % of respondents who feel that their community is a safe place for women and youth

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		N	Percent	N	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	30.8%	529	13.2%	-17.6%	114.873	.000	0.329
	Gogrial East	438	64.6%	438	87.2%	22.6%	62.037	.000	0.266
	Twic	451	52.1%	481	65.9%	13.8%	18.446	.000	0.141
	Jur River	260	83.8%	262	82.4%	-1.4%	0.202	.904	0.020
Sex of household head	Male	1131	50.7%	1342	58.3%	7.6%	38.899	.000	0.125
	Female	550	59.5%	368	54.9%	-4.6%	5.004	.082	0.074
Disability status of respondent	Disabled	71	43.7%	39	66.7%	23.0%	5.760	.056	0.229
	Not Disabled	1610	54.0%	1671	57.4%	3.4%	25.793	.000	0.089
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	48.6%	767	51.5%	2.9%	34.360	.000	0.149
	Female	906	57.7%	943	62.6%	4.9%	5.546	.062	0.055
Programme Area Lead	AVSI	532	30.8%	529	13.2%	-17.6%	114.873	.000	0.329
	NRC	488	66.4%	511	69.3%	2.9%	2.287	.319	0.048
	WVSS	661	62.3%	670	83.7%	21.4%	79.610	.000	0.245
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Years	180	53.3%	196	62.8%	9.5%	5.517	.063	0.121
	≥25 years	1501	53.6%	1514	56.9%	3.3%	36.602	.000	0.110
Total		1681	53.5%	1710	57.6%	4.1%	30.368	.000	0.095

Indicator 2: % of respondents who believe that the majority of their friends and community members currently agree with key gender attitude statements

The above indicator was measured using the Gender-Equity Men Scale of the UN women. The area of interest was percentage of respondents who had high gender equity lenses. Specifically, out of the maximum score of 39, focus was on respondents who scored 31 to 49 (high gender equity attitudes). Overall (Table 8), there was a significant reduction of 5.1% between the baseline and endline in percentage of respondents who had high gender equity attitudes, $\chi^2(1, 3391)=54.489$, $P<.001$. In comparison to target of 20%, current indicator value translates into nine percent achievement and therefore 91% below the end-of-life project target. The project had a small negative effect size on this indicator. Statistically significant reductions were noted across all categories of respondents except in NRC area, Twic, and Jur River where reductions were not statistically significant, implying unchanged attitudes compared to the baseline. The evaluation noted an increase to 95.3% at MTE from 89.4% at baseline in percentage of respondents who had moderate equity attitudes. The project has not comprehensively addressed gender attitudes among project beneficiaries. At the time of the MTE, gender strategy development was in

progress. A deliberate effort is required to change attitudes. While project strategy is gender inclusive through deliberate targeting of female members of the community, it requires a concerted approach to change gender attitudes. Anecdotal evidence from focus group discussion however indicated that there is some change in attitudes of men towards women. In such meetings, evaluation participants recounted;

You know the project brought us together and we have got to know that what a man can do a woman can do unlike before when men could be the only ones to work. Like in farming, men could be the ones to do farming but since the project came it changed our minds and women also started work/ doing farming (SGD with Farmers).

Initially men would be the only ones to take children to the health facility and also pay medical bill. When the project came now both men and women take children to health facilities and pay bills due to the project which sensitized us on working together as family... (SGD with Farmers).

This project has changed our lives a lot. Before women would not be allowed to go to the markets and attend meetings but now days we can attend meetings, go to the markets and also do business and earn money (SGD with Farmers).

Table 8: Percentage of Respondents with High Gender Equity Attitudes

Characteristics		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P	Effect Size (j)
		N	High Equity	N	High Equity				
Project Area Lead	AVSI	532	7.3%	529	3.2%	-4.1%	8.994	0.003	0.097
	NRC	488	3.1%	511	2.3%	-0.8%	0.500	0.480	0.052
	WVSS	661	9.4%	670	0.1%	-9.3%	62.87	0.000	0.229
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	7.3%	529	3.2%	-4.1%	8.994	0.003	-0.092
	Gogrial East	438	14.2%	428	0.0%	14.2%	66.722	0.000	-0.276
	Twic	451	0.4%	481	0.4%	0.0%	0.004	0.949	-0.002
	Jur River	260	5.0%	262	4.2%	-0.8%	0.191	0.662	-0.019
Sex of Respondent	Male	661	7.7%	765	2.3%	-5.4%	23.364	0.000	-0.123
	Female	775	6.2%	943	1.3%	-4.9%	31.427	0.000	-0.13
Disability status of respondent	Disabled;	71	8.5%	39	0.0%	-8.5%	3.486	0.062	-0.178
	Not Disabled	1610	6.8%	1671	1.8%	-5.0%	50.927	0.000	-0.125
Sex of household head	Male	775	8.1%	1342	1.9%	-6.2%	51.871	0.000	-0.145
	Female	906	4.4%	368	1.1%	-3.3%	8.005	0.005	-0.093
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Years	180	5.6%	196	1.5%	-4.1%	4.554	0.033	-0.11
	≥25 years	1501	7.1%	1514	1.8%	-5.3%	49.807	0.000	-0.129
Total		1681	6.9%	1710	1.8%	-5.1%	54.489	0.000	-0.127

Indicator 3: % change in measure of likelihood of traditional court rulings on HLP being made in a woman's favour

The mid-term evaluation studied the likelihood of traditional court rulings on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) being made in a woman's favour. In comparison to baseline value of 62%, MTE findings (Table 9) indicated that 69.5% of respondents reported that there is a likelihood of traditional court rulings on HLP being made in a woman's favour. This represents a 7.5% increase in a likelihood of traditional court rulings

on HLP being made in a woman's favour over the baseline. The change is categorised as very small effect, $\phi=0.079$. The findings revealed that the difference between baseline survey and mid-term evaluation findings was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1)=21.43$, $P<.001$. In terms of achievement of the desired level of improvement from 62% at baseline to project target of 75% or increase of 13%, the project has achieved 57.7% of its target. This is above the average at the midterm in terms of achievement of the desired level. Disaggregated findings revealed significant changes in all categories of participants except AVSI/Cueibet and Jur River; respondents from female headed households and youth (14-24 years). From MTE results, the training of traditional chiefs have started bearing results as illustrated below:

Once the case is brought I listen to both parties and make a judgement without taking side. If it's a woman who is right, she wins the case and if it's a man he wins the case (KII with local leader).

Women with land cases are handled by my office. We do investigations and the person on the right side (right owner of the land owns the land). Women have a right to own land like men (KII with local leaders).

Table 9: % change in measure of likelihood of traditional court rulings on HLP being made in a woman's favour

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		Sample	Percent	Sample	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	56.4%	529	50.5%	-5.9%	3.734	.053	-0.059
	Gogrial East	438	63.7%	438	81.1%	17.4%	32.978	.000	0.194
	Twic	451	56.5%	481	71.3%	14.8%	22.079	.000	0.154
	Jur River	260	79.6%	262	85.1%	5.5%	2.718	.099	0.072
Sex of household head	Male	1131	64.2%	1342	71.9%	7.7%	16.902	.000	0.083
	Female	550	57.3%	368	60.6%	3.3%	1.005	.316	0.033
Disability status of respondent	Disabled	71	49.3%	39	82.1%	32.8%	11.343	.001	0.321
	Not Disabled	1610	62.5%	1671	69.2%	6.7%	16.357	.000	0.071
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	61.9%	767	68.8%	6.9%	8.117	.004	0.073
	Female	906	61.9%	943	70.0%	8.1%	13.413	.000	0.085
Programme Area Lead	AVSI	532	56.4%	529	50.5%	-5.9%	3.734	.053	-0.059
	NRC	488	70.7%	511	80.6%	9.9%	13.408	.000	0.116
	WVSS	661	59.9%	670	76.0%	16.1%	39.440	.000	0.172
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Years	180	62.8%	196	65.3%	2.5%	.261	.610	0.026
	≥25 years	1501	61.8%	1514	70.0	8.2%	22.498	.000	0.086
Total		1681	62%	1710	69.5%	7.5%	21.431	.000	0.079

3.2.4 Outcome 2: Increased anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict

Indicator: % of HH reporting good social cohesion

In comparison to the baseline survey (Table 10), the respondents who reported good social cohesion in their community increased from 60.2% to 76.9%. This represents 16.7% increase in respondents that reported good social cohesion in their community compared to the project target of 19.2% (indicator value of 80%). The analysis revealed that 84% of project target had been achieved. The difference between baseline and midterm evaluation findings was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1)=109.77$, $P<.001$. Project effects had a small effect size. Near moderate effect sizes were detected in Gogrial East, Twic and in WVSS operational area. The observed change points to positive project contribution towards building good social cohesion within the community. There were statistically significant increase in different categories of beneficiaries reporting good social cohesion except among beneficiaries with disabilities. Overall, project activities and structures such as peace committees were contributing to solving conflicts within the

community. In this way, the community had a more negotiated and peaceful approach to resolving conflicts without resorting to revenge killings. In addition, working in groups has also contributed to harmony among community members in different locations. This observation is further illustrated by qualitative feedback from beneficiary group members and leaders presented below:

Initially people used not to live together but when the project came it sensitized people on how to live together and now they do live together and they are united (KII with S4T group leader).

The project has shown us how to coexist with each other and how to handle cases of disagreements in the community (KII with GoSS official).

NRC has brought community together. Before most of us did not know each other. Initially we would fight but the project brought us together and we are united since we work as a group (SGD with Farmer Group Leaders).

As peace committees we have observed that there are a lot of change since the project came unlike before. The changes are, before people did not know themselves but these days they know each other and they are united. They work as a group unlike before (KII with peace development Committee leaders)

Table 10: % of HH reporting good social cohesion

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		N	Percent	N	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	69.2%	529	77.3%	8.1%	8.972	.003	0.092
	Gogrial East	438	60.3%	438	84.5%	24.2%	64.152	.000	0.271
	Twic	451	49.2%	481	73.8%	24.6%	59.637	.047	0.253
	Jur River	260	60.8	262	69.1%	8.3%	3.963	.003	0.087
Sex of household head	Male	1131	60.9%	1342	79.0%	18.1%	96.758	.000	0.198
	Female	550	58.7%	368	69.3%	10.6%	10.556	.001	0.107
Disability status of respondent	Disabled	71	56.3%	39	71.8%	15.5%	2.548	.110	0.152
	Not Disabled	1610	60.4%	1671	77.0%	16.6%	105.954	.000	0.180
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	64.9%	767	80.3%	15.4%	45.983	.000	0.173
	Female	669	56.2%	943	74.1%	17.9%	65.690	.000	0.188
Programme Area Lead	AVSI	532	69.2%	529	77.3%	8.10%	8.972	.003	0.092
	NRC	488	58.6%	511	70.6%	12.0%	15.855	.000	0.126
	WVSS	661	54.2%	670	81.3%	27.1%	112.698	.000	0.291
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Yrs	180	57.2%	196	77.6%	20.4%	17.767	.000	0.217
	≥25 Yrs	1501	60.6%	1514	76.8%	16.2%	92.674	.000	0.175
Total		1681	60.2%	1710	76.9%	16.7%	109.774	.000	0.180

Indicator: % of HH who demonstrate knowledge and use of Early Warning Systems and know what to do in case of an emergency or disaster

In comparison to the baseline survey, the households who demonstrated knowledge and use of early warning systems and knew what to do in case of an emergency or disaster increased from 10.5% to 22.3% (Table 11). This translates into 11.8% increase. The findings further indicated that the difference between the baseline survey and mid-term evaluation findings were statistically significant, $\chi^2(1)=109.77$, $P<.001$. Statistically significant positive changes on this indicator were noted on all categories of beneficiaries, except AVSI area where a reduction was noted. The overall effect of 11.5% was small effect size, $\phi=.158$. However, a moderate effect was observed in Twic, with NRC and WVSS areas almost having similar effect sizes.

The project seeks to increase the indicator value to 25%. This is a target of 14.5% over the baseline. The MTE effect of 11.8% reflects an achievement of 81.2% of the target performance for this indicator. This target is on track of being realised. The community trainings on disaster risk reduction, training and equipping community structures such as Boma Development Committees to identify and manage risk have contributed to improving the knowledge and use of Early Warning Systems.

Table 11: % of HH who demonstrate knowledge and use of Early Warning Systems and know what to do in case of an emergency or disaster

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		Sample	Percent	Sample	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	21.6%	529	14.4%	-7.2%	9.445	.002	-0.094
	Gogrial East	438	6.2%	438	16.2%	10.0%	22.244	.000	0.159
	Twic	451	4.4%	481	37.0%	32.6%	147.590	.000	0.398
	Jur River	260	5.8%	262	21.4%	15.6%	27.041	.000	0.228
Sex of household head	Male	1131	11.1%	1342	21.8%	10.7%	50.788	.000	0.143
	Female	550	9.5%	368	23.9%	14.4%	35.661	.000	0.197
Disability status of respondent	Disabled	71	9.9%	39	25.6%	15.7%	4.798	.028	0.209
	Not Disabled	1610	10.6%	1671	22.2%	11.6%	80.725	.000	0.157
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	13.0%	767	23.6%	10.6%	28.800	.000	0.137
	Female	906	8.4%	943	21.2%	12.8%	59.806	.000	0.180
Programme Area Lead	AVSI	532	21.6%	529	14.4%	-7.2%	9.445	.002	-0.094
	NRC	488	5.5%	511	27.2%	21.7%	84.591	.000	0.291
	WVSS	661	5.3%	670	24.8%	19.5%	98.493	.000	0.272
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Yrs	180	6.7%	196	21.4%	14.7%	16.625	.000	0.210
	≥25 Yrs	1501	11.0%	1514	22.4%	11.4%	70.340	.000	0.153
Total		1681	10.5%	1710	22.3%	11.8%	85.149	.000	0.158

Indicator: Average value of member savings + disbursements including social funds per group member

Table 12 contains information on selected performance indicators of S4T groups. Overall, the groups had mobilised USD 27,314.00 as at May 2021. The average savings per group was USD 379.36. The average savings per member was SSP 8,639.28 (USD 14.40) against the project target of SSP 20000. This average savings were equivalent to 43.2% of the set target. Groups had disbursed USD 17,436.00, which was equivalent of 63.8% of total savings. Out of the disbursed funds, 67.9% were repaid while 32.1% were outstanding. Out of the total savings by all groups, 34.9% was held in cash. The groups had a social fund of USD 1,598.00, which was equivalent to 5.9% of total savings.

The loans from S4T groups had different outcomes among targeted members. Findings showed that 544 micro-businesses were established; 240 members accessed health services; 212 members purchased food items; 194 persons were employed by S4T and 141 children were supported to go to school (WVSS et al, 2021/05).

The S4T groups however faced some challenges which affected performance of members. These challenges included reduced produce and livestock prices and local currency depreciation which affected profitability of capitalised enterprises and their ability to service borrowed funds.

Table 12: Selected S4T Indicators

Indicator	N	Total (All Groups)		Group Average (USD)^	
		SSP	USD	SSP	USD
Total savings by the S4T groups	72	16,388,711.00	27,314.00	227,620.99	379.36

Balance in the Box	72	5,712,500.00	9,520.00	79,340.28	132.22
Loan distributed	72	10,462,000.00	17,436.00	145,305.56	242.17
Loan paid	72	7,103,380.00	11,838.00	98,658.06	164.42
Loan not paid	72	3,036,500.00	5,060.00	42,173.61	70.28
Total interest got	72	1,282,280.00	2,137.00	17,809.44	29.68
Total social funds accumulated	72	958,800.00	1,598.00	13,316.67	22.19

*Exchange rate: 1USD=600 SSP

Source: S4T Health Check with Some computations by Consultants

Qualitative Feedback on Contribution of S4T groups in improving wellbeing of members

S4T groups were registering different outcomes among targeted beneficiaries and communities. These positive changes included: Enabling members to save part of their income; buy basic necessities (food, medical bills and school fees); purchase of agro-inputs and availing much needed start-up capital for micro-businesses. Some of the illuminating feedback from S4T members are presented below:

As per now, we have saved 1,172,000 SSP (USD 2800), excluding the money that project gave to the group (150,000 SSP (USD 370)) (KII with S4T group leaders).

Whenever S4T members experience shortage of food in their homes, they borrow money from our S4T group and buy food for eating in their homes (KII with S4T group leaders).

We have benefited a lot from S4T. Members borrow money to use it for hiring ox plough, buying seed and now members are able to engage in growing of sorghum and ground nuts for food (KII with S4T group leaders).

Since we started saving, we have been lending this money to group members to do businesses of baking bread and cakes in the market and now among the group member none of them goes to collect firewood but all members are doing business due to the project (SGD with Farmer Group Leaders).

Before we did not know how to save money, but the project brought for us a trainer who trained us on how to save money and do business. We got the skills and we are now saving the money we get from doing business (SGD with Farmer Group Leaders).

Indicator: % of households reporting a reduction in incidents/conflicts

This indicator was recomputed after rectifying an oversight in the MEAL Plan (Table 13). The scale for its computation should include participants who indicated absence of conflict in the community and those who had said there was conflict but no case had been experienced in the recall period (three months). After recompilation, the percentage of household reporting conflict to have occurred at least once or more times over three months slightly increased to 29.1% at MTE from the baseline of 26.1%. This reflects an increase of 3% between the two periods. This increase was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 3.99$, $P < .025$. Of all areas, AVSI/Cueibet reported a statistically significant reduction in percentage of households reporting conflicts reduction of conflict, $\chi^2(1) = 7.039$, $P < .050$. This reduction confirms qualitative feedback from the community and key informant which indicated reduction in conflicts due to different measures adopted by the project. Peace committees in the nine targeted Bomas were at the centre of resolving conflicts. Aggrieved households were at the forefront of seeking peace and reconciliation with violators of their rights.

Furthermore, there were statistically significant increments in the percentage of household reporting conflict in Twic, Gogrial East, female headed households, female beneficiaries and both NRC and WVSS operational areas. The increase in Gogrial East was significant but small while the increase in Jur River was not significant. The slight increase in conflict is mainly driven by Twic results. Twic areas bordering Unity

State suffer from frequent cattle raiding from communities in Unity State. This accounts for increase in the indicator. In Gogrial East, conflict was driven by conflict between farmers and pastoralist over destruction of crops by livestock and marriages of young girls not sanctioned by their caregivers. In Jur River, there had been some violent clashes within SPLM-IO groups, which has since subsided. Overall, peace is very fragile item which can disappear anytime. Small incident can lead to negative change in perception about safety and security.

However, even with insignificant increase in respondents reporting occurrence of conflict, project beneficiaries and structures pointed out some positive changes due to implementation of different peace-building initiatives under FORESITE project. Stakeholders noted:

There is change and cooperation within the community. There are no more conflicts which are caused by cattle eating crops of other people within our community. The cattle camp club mediates between the owner of cattle that have eaten the crops and owner of the crop and cases are settled well without fighting (KII with local leaders).

The conflicts have reduced. Before you would have conflicts in the community but now the conflicts have reduced. We try to reconcile worrying parties within farmers' and S4T groups and communities (KII with peace development Committee leaders).

What has changed is a lot has happened. Since we started saving, we are able to access money in form of a loan and get treatment whenever anyone in my household is sick. Members also borrow money to pay school fees for their children. Of recent the borehole broke down and people did not have money and the community came and borrowed money and used for repair of the borehole. After the money was collected from the community members and was paid back with interest. We have known ourselves. When we were brought together during the training and CFA (FMNR) activities we got to know each other (SGD with Farmers).

Like now group members are friends. People from other payams and in the same project have known each other and now they are friends unlike before when people from one payam would wait for people from another payam and fight them (SGD with Farmers).

Table 13: Percentage of households reporting conflict to have occurred at least once or more times over the last three months

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		N	Percent	N	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	532	64.8%	529	56.9%	-7.9%	7.039	0.008	-.081
	Gogrial East	438	1.1%	438	6.8%	5.7%	18.6	.000	0.146
	Twic	451	18.2%	481	32.0%	13.8%	23.559	.000	.159
	Jur River	260	2.3%	262	5.0%	2.7%	2.621	0.105	0.071
Sex of household head	Male	1131	29.4%	1342	28.3%	-1.1%	0.323	0.57	-0.011
	Female	550	19.3%	368	32.1%	12.8%	19.559	.000	0.146
Disability status of respondent	Disabled	71	23.9%	39	17.9%	-6.0%	0.53	0.466	-0.069
	Not Disabled	1610	26.1%	1671	29.4%	3.3%	4.274	0.039	0.036
Sex of Respondent	Male	775	35.0%	765	34.7%	-0.3%	0.014	0.906	-0.003
	Female	906	18.4%	943	24.6%	6.2%	10.393	0.001	0.075
AVSI		532	64.8%	529	56.9%	-7.9%	7.039	0.008	-.081*

Programme Area Lead	NRC	488	12.3%	511	19.0%	6.7%	8.427	0.004	0.092
	WVSS	661	5.0%	670	14.9%	9.9%	36.501	.000	0.166
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Years	180	17.8%	196	25.0%	7.2%	2.896	0.089	0.088
	≥25 years	1501	27.0%	1514	29.7%	2.7%	2.523	0.112	0.029
Total		1681	26.1%	1710	29.1%	3.0%	3.99	0.046	0.034

3.2.5 Outcome 3: Improved longer-term food security and income especially for women and youth.

Indicator 1: Median household income (SSP/ (US\$)

As per the indicator definition, the beneficiary household survey gathered data on incomes earned by households from all possible sources over the period of three months (Quarter) preceding the survey. This data was used to generate information on median household income per quarter as presented in Table 14. MTE results revealed that median income increased to SSP 45,000.00 (US\$110.11) at MTE from SSP 10,054.00 (US\$62) at baseline. This translates into an increase of SSP 34,946.00 (US\$48.1). The increase was 347.6% for earnings in SSP and 77.6% in US dollars over the baseline. The project targets increasing median incomes from USD 62 to USD 80.17 (30% increase) by the end of its lifespan. In comparison to these targets, MTE revealed a 77% increase in median income or an increase of USD 48.1 compared to a target of USD 18.17. The project achievement at MTE was 265% of the set target, implying that the project had exceeded its target by 165%.

Further analysis (Table 14, column US\$-%) revealed significant increase in median incomes at all levels of analysis. Notably, the highest increase was noted in WVSS operational area followed by NRC and AVSI. By county, the highest income increase was noted in Gogrial East, followed by Twic, Jur River and Cueibet. The increase in median incomes was higher among female beneficiaries than their male counterparts. Consistently, female headed households had a much higher increase in incomes than male-headed households. The incomes of persons with disabilities increased almost four-fold for beneficiaries with disabilities compared to a three-quarter increase for beneficiaries without any form of disability. Analysis by age group revealed that households of older persons registered a higher increase in comes than those of youth.

While the nature of indicator did not support test of difference, an independent samples T-test revealed that the mean difference in income between mid-term and baseline survey data (US\$ 297.58) was statistically significant, $t(1050.44) = 5.587, P < 0.001$ with a very large effect size greater than one. The large increase in incomes of targeted beneficiaries can be attributed to very large increase in crop harvests from project supported farm activities (crops and vegetable mother gardens) and, access to micro-credit from S4T which were invested in group businesses such as cattle buying and selling. These activities have generated significant profits which are shared between members and contributed to increase in median incomes as per testimonies from project beneficiaries below:

It has enabled me to grow crops for both food and sale. I am able to feed my children and pay school fees for my children as a result of food produced using seeds and ox ploughs provided by the project and money from sale of some of the produce (KII with local leaders).

There are changes, before we were not eating greens. During dry season we sell vegetables such as tomatoes, okra and we also eat these vegetables. We have been earning money from mother gardens which the project helped us to establish (SGD with Farmers).

In terms of earning like for my case I am able to pay school fees for my children, buy food for my children, and pay for medication for my family members and earn 10000 SSP every day when vegetables are taken and sold to the market. We were given vegetable seeds for mother gardens (SGD with Farmers).

Furthermore, the project impact on median incomes could be better if it was not for hyperinflation and currency depreciation of the South Sudan Pound. This is validated by the difference in percentage increase in income denominated in local currency compared to US dollars. The US dollar increase is almost five times less than SSP increase, showing loss of real value of the local currency between the baseline and MTE. Indeed the indicative exchange rate for the two currencies depreciated from SSP 162 at baseline (April 2020) to SSP 409 at MTE (July/August 2021), BoSS, 2021. Vegetable farmer groups were involved in diversified vegetable cultivation in small volumes instead of focusing on few vegetables produce in large quantities. In addition, groups produced very little quantities of a variety of vegetables without focusing on large scale vegetable crop production for income generation. In addition, the demand for vegetables was low compared to local production. This would imply that there is need to balance the production purpose (income and home consumption) and existing demand in local market before determining the number of farmers to be supported on vegetable production. Domestic consumption by targeted households may outstrip the vegetable demand by other households.

Table 14: Median Quarterly Household Income

Characteristic		Baseline			MTE			Effect			
		N	SSP	USD	N	SSP	USD	SSP	USD	SSP-%	US\$-%
Project Area Lead	AVSI	364	19,100.00	117.78	355	52,500.00	128.47	33,400.00	10.69	174.9%	9.1%
	NRC	191	7,500.00	46.25	329	36,000.00	88.09	28,500.00	41.84	380.0%	90.5%
	WVSS	213	6,000.00	37	340	41,125.00	100.63	35,125.00	63.63	585.4%	172.0%
County	Cueibet	364	19,100.00	117.78	355	52,500.00	128.47	33,400.00	10.69	174.9%	9.1%
	Gogrial East	127	5,500.00	33.92	229	45,300.00	110.85	39,800.00	76.93	723.6%	226.8%
	Twic	176	6,133.50	37.82	248	35,500.00	86.87	29,366.50	49.05	478.8%	129.7%
	Jur River	101	8,500.00	52.42	192	34,950.00	85.52	26,450.00	33.10	311.2%	63.1%
Sex of Respondent	Male	386	18,000.00	111	489	55,000.00	134.58	37,000.00	23.58	205.6%	21.2%
	Female	382	6,500.00	40.08	535	37,000.00	90.54	30,500.00	50.46	469.2%	125.9%
Disability Status of Respondent	Disabled;	36	8,500.00	52.42	22	99,500.00	243.47	91,000.00	191.05	1070.6%	364.5%
	Not Disabled	732	10,200.00	62.9	1002	45,000.00	110.11	34,800.00	47.21	341.2%	75.1%
Sex of Household Head	Male	553	13,000.00	80.17	810	45,400.00	111.09	32,400.00	30.92	249.2%	38.6%
	Female	215	6,000.00	37	214	39,125.00	95.74	33,125.00	58.74	552.1%	158.8%
Age group of Respondent	14-24 Yrs	62	10,000.00	61.67	98	37,500.00	91.76	27,500.00	30.09	275.0%	48.8%
	≥25 Yrs	706	10,100.00	62.28	926	45,000.00	110.11	34,900.00	47.83	345.5%	76.8%
Total	All	768	10,054.00	62	1024	45,000.00	110.11	34,946.00	48.11	347.6%	77.6%

Indicator 2: Average metric tons produced in the last 12 months, disaggregated by crop type- groundnuts, and sorghum

The FORESITE Project targets to increase production of sorghum and groundnuts as part of its strategy to achieve objective resilience among targeted households and communities. The project targets to increase production of sorghum and ground nuts over its life time. Specifically, the project seeks to increased sorghum production from 0.355 Metric Tons (MT) to 0.500 MT. Similarly, FORESITE targets to increase groundnut production from 0.287MT to 0.402 MT. The extent to which the project is progressing

these targets was assessed. Overall results (Table 15) revealed that the project increased sorghum production by 177.7% and groundnuts production by 74.3% compared to a target increase of 40% between the baseline and MTE. Detailed findings are presented under each crop below:

a. Sorghum Production

MTE results revealed an increase of 0.631 MT in sorghum production between the baseline of 0.355MT and MTE 0.905MT. This translates into an increase of 177.7% between the baseline and MTE. The increase/mean difference was statistically significant, $t(1432.309)=10.101$, $P<0.001$. There was a statistically significant increase in all other categories except for AVSI/Cueibet area. From the analysis, all categories of beneficiaries targeted by the project have registered increase in sorghum production. The project had a very large effect on sorghum production as per computed effect sizes. NRC and WV areas registered very high increment due to high establishment of demonstration gardens for learning, in addition to structured training conducted by the project. The analysis also revealed a statistically insignificant reduction of 0.105 hectares under sorghum production, $t(2059.957)=-1.289$, $P>0.005$. However, sorghum yields increased from 0.524MT to 0.802MT per hectare reflecting improved productivity. This increase was statistically significant, $t(1291.531)=4.004$, $P<0.001$.

Table 15: Average Sorghum Production among FORESITE Beneficiary Households (Kg)

Characteristics		Baseline		MTE		Mean Difference		t-stat	P-Value	Effect size (d)
		N	Vol.	N	Vol.	Vol.	%change			
Project Area Lead	AVSI	382	643.20	374	665.88	22.67	3.5%	0.348	.728	1.06
	NRC	327	246.56	401	1333.86	1087.30	441.0%	6.598	.000	20.45
	WVSS	424	179.53	495	947.28	767.75	427.6%	11.102	.000	22.19
County	Cueibet	382	643.20	374	665.88	22.67	3.5%	0.348	.728	1.06
	GE	269	200.74	381	778.20	577.47	287.7%	12.133	.000	25.93
	Twic	297	155.93	297	1876.87	1720.94	1103.6%	7.343	.000	28.15
	Jur River	185	305.07	218	687.41	382.34	125.3%	6.848	.000	32.07
Sex of Beneficiary	Male	554	495.33	582	1037.49	542.16	109.5%	5.833	.000	13.79
	Female	579	221.13	688	943.31	722.18	326.6%	8.611	.000	17.06
Disability Status	Disabled	42	319.25	31	1207.74	888.49	278.3%	3.879	.000	31.93
	Not Disabled	1091	356.59	1239	980.94	624.34	175.1%	9.783	.000	15.35
Sex of Household Head	Male	815	401.10	1036	990.18	589.08	146.9%	8.817	.000	15.16
	Female	318	237.59	234	970.06	732.47	308.3%	4.344	.000	15.81
Age Group	14-24 Yrs	120	248.09	155	1573.44	1325.35	534.2%	4.785	.000	23.75
	25 Yrs	1013	367.90	1115	904.88	536.98	146.0%	9.031	.000	14.52
Total	All Respondents	1133	355.21	1270	986.47	631.26	177.7%	10.101	.000	15.59

b. Groundnuts Production

MTE results (Table 16) revealed that FORESITE project significantly and positively impacted on the groundnuts production among targeted households. Household groundnut production increased by 74.3% (0.213MT) between the baselines of 0.287MT and 0.501MT at MTE. The increase is above the 40% target of 0.402MT by 34 percentage points. The Independent Samples T-test of difference in means or increase was statistically significant $t(1661.909)=8.340$, $P<0.001$. This target has been achieved among farmers that have been targeted in the first and second year. The achievement rate is 186% of the target of 0.115MT. The MTE findings of 0.501MT compares well with the post-harvest survey estimate of 0.528MT (WVSS

et al, 2021/01). Disaggregation of results revealed that the project had significant increase in groundnut production among all categories of beneficiaries except for Jur River and persons with disabilities. The analysis further revealed statistically significant increments in size of land under cultivation from 1.1 Ha at baseline to 1.3Ha at MTE, $t(2087.713) = 3.881$, $P < .001$). The groundnut yield registered a small but insignificant reduction of 0.002, $t(1094.695) = -.063$, $P > .005$.

Table 16: Average Groundnut Production among FORESITE Beneficiary Households (Kg)

Characteristics		Baseline		MTE		Mean Difference		t-stat	P-Value	Effect Size (d)
		N	Vol. (Kg)	N	Vol. (Kg)	Vol. (kg)	Percent			
Project Area Lead	AVSI	407	363.46	465	491.94	128.48	35.3%	4.145	.000	11.33
	NRC	178	273.87	290	562.00	288.14	105.2%	3.862	.000	16.97
	WVSS	225	160.18	370	463.56	303.38	189.4%	9.323	.000	17.42
County	Cueibet	407	363.46	465	491.94	128.48	35.3%	4.145	.000	11.33
	GE	190	160.63	324	450.02	289.40	180.2%	8.238	.000	17.01
	Twic	64	104.23	149	757.41	653.18	626.7%	5.317	.000	25.56
	Jur River	149	319.46	187	405.55	86.09	26.9%	1.440	.151	9.28
Sex of Beneficiary	Male	474	354.27	562	556.92	202.65	57.2%	5.700	.000	14.24
	Female	336	192.83	563	444.51	251.68	130.5%	7.073	.000	15.86
Disability Status	Disabled	28	370.82	27	600.67	229.85	62.0%	1.720	.093	15.16
	Not Disabled	782	284.31	1098	498.21	213.89	75.2%	8.223	.000	14.63
Sex of Household Head	Male	629	316.74	921	514.40	197.67	62.4%	6.699	.000	14.06
	Female	181	185.02	204	438.64	253.62	137.1%	5.279	.000	15.93
Age Group	14-24 Yrs	68	251.32	115	648.16	396.84	157.9%	2.841	.005	19.92
	25 Yrs	742	290.60	1010	483.87	193.27	66.5%	8.199	.000	13.90
Total	All Respondents	810	287.30	1125	500.67	213.36	74.3%	8.340	.000	14.61

Factors Explaining Increase in Crop Production

Qualitative feedback from the community attributed increased crop production to better land tilling technology (ox-ploughs) which supports cultivation of large farmlands; increased access to seeds and training of farmers on agronomic practices. These are further illustrated by the following direct quotations from project beneficiaries.

Before I joined the project, I used to plough using local hand hoe. When I joined the project I accessed the Ox plough from the farmers group I am a member and I was able to grow a lot of sorghum and ground nuts which enabled me to earn money and I used part of the money for buying my own ox plough which I am currently using (SGD with Group Farmer leaders).

There is increase in yields. For example, like me before the project I used to harvest 30 malua of ground nuts but now I can harvest 450 malua of ground nuts. This is because of the training I got from the project (SGD with Group Farmer leaders).

We were trained and given ox ploughs. These ox ploughs have helped us a lot we use them for group farming and after individual farming. For the group farms we have shares and at household level we are able to cultivate a lot of land which has enabled us to get a lot of food (SGD with Farmers).

If you have three feddans and they are fertile you can get 15 sacks of sorghum from each. Like me last season I got 18 sacks of sorghum from three feddans because the season was not good (SGD with Farmer Group Leaders).

Indicator 3: % of women and men reporting improved access to inputs needed for income generation

In comparison to baseline survey findings (Table 17), the respondents who had ever accessed inputs needed for income generation increased from 38.4% to 67.6%. This translates into 29.2% increase in respondents who had ever accessed inputs needed for income generation. The findings further showed that the difference between baseline and MTE findings were statistically significant, $\chi^2 = 64.070$, $P < .001$. The project aspires to raise the indicator value to 85% at endline. The current value is 79.5% of its set target. This is above 50% supposed to be achieved midway of the project. In comparison to desired level of improvement (46.6%), the project had achieved 62.9% of this desired change. The change corresponds to a small effect ($\phi = 0.238$). The highest effect sizes were noted in among beneficiaries in Gogrial East; those with disability; and youth. These had median effect sizes. All categories of beneficiaries registered statistically significant increase in access to inputs for income generation. The project approach of linking farmers to agro-input dealers located within accessible areas has directly contributed to this achievement.

Table 17: % of women and men reporting improved access to inputs needed for income generation

Category		Baseline		MTE		Effect	χ^2	P-value	Effect Size (Phi)
		Sample	Percent	Sample	Percent				
County of respondent	Cueibet	106	27.4%	373	52.0%	24.6%	20.161	.000	0.205
	Gogrial East	78	28.2%	256	69.1%	40.9%	41.600	.000	0.353
	Twic	58	62.1%	379	78.4%	16.3%	7.365	.007	0.130
	Jur River	42	52.4%	181	75.1%	22.7%	8.549	.003	0.196
Sex of household head	Male	208	37.5%	634	66.1%	28.6%	58.818	.000	0.225
	Female	76	40.8%	230	73.9%	40.8%	27.807	.000	0.301
Disability status of respondent	Disabled	12	33.3%	25	72.0%	38.7%	5.029	.025	0.369
	Not Disabled	272	38.6%	1164	67.5%	28.9%	78.322	.000	0.234
Sex of Respondent	Male	147	38.1%	551	60.8%	22.7%	24.277	.000	0.186
	Female	137	38.7%	638	73.5%	34.8%	62.206	.000	0.283
Project Area Lead	AVSI	106	27.4%	373	52.0%	24.6%	20.161	.000	0.205
	NRC	65	56.9%	402	78.1%	21.2%	13.453	.000	0.170
	WVSS	113	38.1%	414	71.5%	33.4%	43.269	.000	0.287
Respondent Age Classification	14-24 Years	24	29.2%	139	77.7%	48.5%	23.202	.000	0.377
	≥25 years	260	39.2%	1050	66.3%	27.1%	64.070	.000	0.221
Total		284	38.4%	1189	67.6%	29.2%	64.070	.000	0.238

3.2.5 Summary of Factors Explaining the Nature of Project Performance

The project has performed well in terms of delivery of planned outputs and making progress towards achieving set outcome targets. This good performance is due to overall project strategy in terms of project management and emphasis on sustainability. Specifically, the following factors have contributed to good project performance:

- The use of consortium approach with experienced organisations with unique competences has improved the quality of implementation and delivery of planned outputs and results. The Shared expertise across organisations has contributed to ensuring that implementation across outcomes is properly done.
- Integrated approach to programming where beneficiaries benefit from different interventions has created improvement in different areas. For example, S4T groups do not only mobilise savings

and access to credit, they create social cohesion and increase incomes and promote good working relationships between male and female community members.

- Proper project leadership and management as evidenced by creation of different management and implementation structures at different levels have aided coordination, joined learning and accountability within the consortium and contributed to success of the project.
- Availability of a strong technical project team with accumulated experience in project management. The Project Management team is headed by a very competent and experienced director who coordinates implementation of the project across the three partners. There is very high level of regular communication between partners on progress and areas for improvement.
- Timely availability of sufficient funds provided by EU to implement the project has facilitated implementation of project activities as per approved Detailed Implementation Plan.
- Good collaboration with government in form of their participation in project activities and joint identification of solutions to any challenges has improved project effectiveness.
- The high willingness of the project beneficiaries to participate in the project activities as planned created sense of ownership of project activities and enabled beneficiaries to effectively play their parts
- Technical support from EU technical assistance team and liaison between EU and the consortium has improved resolutions for any challenges.
- Favourable weather during growing season for crops has contributed to improved crop productivity.
- Deliberate mainstreaming of gender by deliberately targeting women has led to gendered outcomes, where women have directly benefited from the project.
- Good relationship forged/linkage with private sector operators for instance in promoting seed production.
- The development of the business continuity strategy helped the project to mitigate against COVID-19 on project activities. The strategy enabled the project to continue safe implementation of its activities in accordance with the detailed implementation plan. This contributed to an appropriate package of activities which have resulted into different results above.

b) Constraining Factors

While there was a commendable level of delivery of project outputs, some of these were yet to translate into reasonable positive results as per outcome targets. Subjective resilience and change in gender attitudes remain areas with slow progress. In addition, some exogenous factors or challenges affect existing achievements on income generation and food security. These challenges include:

- Strong patriarchal culture is difficult to change and generate supportive attitudes towards women and achieve gender specific outcomes. There is still a strong feeling among male and female beneficiaries believing that they cannot be equal.
- In addition, flooding continues to affect beneficiaries who do late planting of crops
- Cross-border conflict such as cattle raiding affects the progress towards attaining the objective of reducing conflicts in the targeted communities.
- The fragile nature of peace building makes absence of conflict to be near to impossible as one small event triggers conflict and takes away the gains.
- Poor macro-economic environment in South Sudan characterised by depreciation of local currency, hyperinflation and low purchasing power of households. Prior to the MTE, the local currency reached an exchange rate of SSP 700 for one USD.

3.2.5 Observations on Plausibility of Theory of Change at MTE

The FORESITE project Theory of Change (ToC) documents the different impact pathways the project envisages after using available resources; implementing activities and delivering outputs. The FORESITE ToC is presented in Appendix 5 for reference. The evaluation sought to examine the plausibility of the project ToC in content of emerging changes and any observed challenges faced by the project. Specifically, the MTE sought to ascertain whether envisaged results are taking place across different pathways and whether assumptions underpinning the ToC continue to hold. As illustrated before, there has been very good implementation of the project in terms of execution of the implementation plan and delivery of outputs. This is a good sign of utilisation of project resources. The project has three broad pathways which comprise (1) Improved food security and income; (2) Improved governance and conflict prevention mechanism and (3) Improved resilience attitudes. MTE findings on progress towards results show strong emerging evidence that different outputs and processes are contributing to improved food and income security. Targets around increasing incomes and increased food production have been achieved. There is increased food access and consumption as per every significant reduction in percentage of households in moderate or severe food insecurity. The changes along the remaining two pathways are slow or not taking place as anticipated due to reasons mentioned *inter alia*. There is some evidence that improved governance and conflict resolution is starting to take shape in Cueibet, which is one of the counties severely affected by conflict. Project efforts in terms of setting up and supporting peace committees is starting to bear results. However, the change in attitudes towards gender is not happening as envisaged. Attitudes are not changed overnight. They require sustained engagement before positive results are observed.

The FORESITE ToC specified different assumptions which had to be constant for the project to be successfully implemented and registered results. The examination of these assumptions and a comparison with the actual situation revealed that some assumptions have held true while some have not. The security situation remained stable in project locations with exception to some clashes between SPLM-IO groups in Jur River. There has been no major influx of IDPs in target locations and limited engagement of government structures with the action. However, the assumption that no major conflict or natural disaster affects project implementation did not hold true as Cueibet experienced conflict albeit on smaller scale compared to the period before the project.

In addition, some critical assumptions and risks were left out and yet they affect project performance. For example, macro-economic instability of the South Sudan economy characterised by volatile depreciation and limited appreciation of the local currency has impact on real value of savings, loans and proceeds from micro-business/investment activities. While the price of inputs can be hedged to avoid unpredictable impact, other aspects such as produce prices cannot be hedged to minimise losses. The project did not consider the level of local demand for produce. While there is planned group marketing and market linkages beyond targeted counties, this was planned for the third year and will need to address low demand suffered by local farmers. Exploring markets in other counties within the state and other parts of South Sudan and value addition can alleviate the problem of low demand in local areas and ensure the project achieves its income improvement objectives.

3.2.6 Effectiveness of the Consortium Approach

The consortium approach entails three organisations designing and jointly implementing project activities in different operational areas. By design, WV is the project lead partner in charge of overall project management, including fund management and accountability. Each of the partners takes lead in implementing specific components of the project across the project area. For example, AVSI is the project lead on peace building and governance; NRC is in charge of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET); Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) and Housing Land and Property (HLP) component. WV on the other hand takes lead on crop agronomy/farming and Savings for Transformation (S4T) components.

In terms of management, the consortium has a structure with three levels comprising the Steering Committee (National office level that meets every six months); Project Management Unit/Committee (constituted by senior project staff that meets every two months) and Technical Working Groups comprising staff in charge of implementing project activities, who meet regularly, sometimes weekly, if need arises.

Overall, the consortium approach worked well. The approach facilitated sharing of unique competences across organisations which contributed to improving project quality. The approach also contributed to shared learning through joint review and monitoring meetings involving all partners. In addition, any challenges faced by any of the three partners which affect project activities were openly discussed and solution identified. This observation is backed by the reflection by one of the evaluation participants below,

One of the reasons the project has performed well is because of the very good collaboration within the consortium members. When I say our collaboration is excellent, I mean we have different platforms that really bring this together the different consortium members to come together and discuss on various issues in relation to the project including; what does our plan look like let's say for the week, for the month, and how are we progressing in terms of the detailed implementation plans, what are the key learning within every implementation partners, how are each consortium members delivering in their responsibility in terms of technical leads aspect. Just to give you an example, the project managers from each consortium members meet every two months, we call it a project management unit. Every two months we choose who will strategically discuss in terms of the project challenges and how we are progressing. The project team also carries out weekly key meetings to discuss their weekly plan and their weekly achievements and also see how they are addressing any challenges in the course of implementing project (Key Informant).

The consortium approach has also generated different benefits to the community and three partners. The project coverage of four counties in three states is quite big and enabled organisation to reach communities with different unique services. Only NRC shared a project location (Twic County but work in different Payams). The other three counties are serviced by only one organisation. The approach has enabled such communities to benefit from unique services offered by the different organisations.

Partner staff have been capacitated through mentoring, joint training, learning visits and peer support. Accordingly, some staff have developed professionally in terms of team work, programing, and management of partnership relationships.

The partnership challenges witnessed in form of delayed submission of reports and accountabilities have not had adverse effect on project management and reporting to the donor. These are expected but have been managed well.

The proper functioning of the consortium approach has been aided by different factors. These factors include: collaboration of international humanitarian agencies with long term experience and competences; proper role definition; good project leadership (director level); embracing of open communication through mails, regular virtual and face to face meetings and peer support among staff.

3.2.7 Accountability mechanism and Risk Management

The evaluation sought to assess whether proper accountability and risk management framework(s) have been put in place to minimize risks on program implementation. Overall, there were sufficient accountability and effective mechanisms put in place by partners in accordance with grant agreement procedures and good programming practices. The project has instituted a mechanism for accountability to affected populations; consortium and to the donor. These mechanisms are presented hereunder:

a. Accountability of Affected Populations

Accountability to affected Populations entails putting in place a process and means of ensuring that the project receives feedback on its services and products delivered to beneficiary groups and partners. The project has ensured accountability to project beneficiaries through using existing community structures; ad hoc community help desk; suggestion boxes; Government receiving complaints against project staff and forwarding them to consortium members, RRC officials witnessing key activities, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys and holding meeting with Government officials. These are further explained hereunder:

The project used different structures to ensure accountability to affected populations. These mechanism include Boma Development Committees (BDC) which act as Accountability to Affected Population Committees. In each targeted Payam, there is an established BDC which has an average of ten members, with two to three members being women. These have been given orientation on receiving complaints from the community and forwarding them to the project for redress. So far, the BDC worked well in capturing complaints and forwarding them to consortium members for redress. Community members found it easy to approach these committees and raise complaints. All consortium partners depending on BDC to act as help desks for the project. Use of existing structures such as the BDC has maximized utilization of existing community structures and avoiding duplication of such structures.

In addition to the BDC used by all consortium members, NRC also put in place a Community Help Desk during special large scale community activities. On days where there is distribution of inputs, NRC instituted a help desk to receive, respond to and address complaints from the community. This ad hoc committee worked well in ensuring timely receipt and resolution of complaints from the community.

Furthermore, the community also channelled their complaints through suggestion boxes which are placed at community level. In some cases, communities also forwarded their complaints to local leaders (Payam administrators and local chiefs), who in turn forward them to project officials for redress. These complaints are forwarded through direct phone calls or physical visits to offices to submit complaints and receive corresponding feedback. This approach was appropriate for complaints which were against the organisation in nature or where community felt complaint resolution was not satisfactory.

Additionally, all field activities are witnessed by a representative from the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (NRC) as evidence of delivery of inputs to the community. RRC officials are required to sign as witnesses on attendance sheets. For intervention such as Cash for Assets, RRC officials are informed of Beneficiary entitlements and check whether such entitlements are delivered and received by Beneficiaries.

Another mechanism put in place is regular Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys. By the MTE, three PDM surveys had completed since project inception. Two reports were produced and one report was being prepared. PDMs were conducted after a major activity had been carried out (seeds and tools) to document and verify the nature of support and feedback on the quality of the support. PDMs documented knowledge and receipt of entitlements, information on utilisation and satisfaction with the quality of entitlements received and any staff conduct issues during distribution. PDM reports informed internal management reviews of project activities and enabled the project implementation team to identify any corrective actions to improve project performance.

The project implementation team regularly held meetings with Government officials to review progress and identify any gaps in project implementation. These meetings provide good space to harmonise understanding of project implementation approaches, beneficiary complaints to generate consensus on key issues and create sense of ownership among Government officials and communities.

b. Accountability at Consortium Level

There is horizontal accountability at consortium level where the three organisations provide accountability to each other on project performance. The accountability commences with development of detailed implementation plan annually and quarterly. On the basis of these plans, financial and narrative progress reports are shared between the three organisations. In addition, regular project implementation team meetings are held to review progress and address any emerging challenges during the implementation of the project. Consortium level meetings were regular and took place at different levels (senior management level-Juba; Project Management Unit level and Technical Working Group). These meetings were effective in sharing of experiences, including challenges which required redress. Periodically, consortium members also undertake joint field monitoring of project activities to document what is working well, what is not working well, key lessons and action points for responsible officials.

b. Donor Accountability

The Project Lead (WVSS) provided periodic project narrative and financial reports to the EU Technical Advisors (TAs) in line with requirements of the grant agreement. In addition, EU TAs also conducted field visits where findings are discussed and actions agreed with Consortium members. In addition, all project activities are captured in the EU Community Information System (CIS) database with location coordinates which enables remote checking of project activities. Overall, accountability to the donor was always timely and satisfactory.

3.3 Project Efficiency

Project efficiency was assessed using different parameters. These included the extent to which the project minimised costs and optimised resources, existence of opportunities to reach more beneficiaries and the extent to which there were alterations to programme design to make the project more effective. The findings on each of the elements have been presented hereunder.

a) Cost Minimisation and Resource Optimisation

The project adopted different strategies for cost minimisation and resources optimisation. These strategies included cost sharing and seed multiplication approach. These approaches have resulted into more efficiency in terms of cost minimisation, resource optimisation and reaching more people as indicated in the qualitative findings below:

*We put in place a cost sharing arrangement. Which means that the project pays 50% and the farmers pays 50%. This kind of arrangement has not only Introduced sense of ownership but also makes our resources more efficient to reach more people and also pave the way to ensure sustainability.so this is one of the strategies to ensure cost saving through the sharing arrangement **(KII with project staff)**.*

*We also introduced seed multiplication groups. Under this arraignment, the private sector or the seed company has come into the play and has covered 50% of the cost for the seeds. This arrangement is one of the strategies which the project has tried to introduce to save cost and be efficient **(KII with project staff)**.*

b) Existing Opportunities to reach more beneficiaries

The evaluation also studied different existing opportunities to reach more beneficiaries. The evaluation revealed that there are existing opportunities to reach more beneficiaries. These opportunities included; willingness of none project beneficiaries who initially thought that beneficiaries would not benefit from the project interventions to join the project, good working relationship with government officials such as county officials, chiefs and Payam administrators. In addition, there is also an opportunity of willingness to share costs among project beneficiaries where they pay 50% and the project pay 50%. Due to cost sharing,

the current number of beneficiaries for ploughs is a 100% increase in the number of beneficiaries who would be reached without cost sharing (free).

c) Alterations to programme design

There were no alterations to the original project design and in terms of collaboration between different partners as presented in project proposal. The project was being implemented by the consortium which include World Vision South Sudan, NRC and AVSI. These partners have continued implementing project activities as planned and indicated in the proposal as illustrated hereunder:

We are pursuing what has been stated in the proposal for example the cost sharing is part of the proposal, the establishment of various farmers' groups is part of the proposal. So we still adhere to what the proposal has put in place. So there is no any change on the strategy (KII with project staff).

While the project experienced some staff turnover of about three staff members over a two year period, this was considered normal and did not significantly affect project performance. However, there was high turnover of Government officials due to redeployments which affected shared understanding of the project and the role of Government as part of building sustainability. In addition, attracting national staff who are committed to working in remote locations was difficult. Those who accept demand for higher salaries above the thresholds offered by the project. This explains the delayed recruitment of the project manager and M&E manager for the project.

3.4 Project Relevance

The mid-term evaluation, assessed the relevance of the project and impact. These were assessed through checking alignment of the project to national strategies and UN's sustainable development goals; project's ability to respond to beneficiary needs, project adaptation to context and emerging beneficiary needs and priorities. Details on each of these elements have been presented hereunder:

a. Alignment to country Strategies

The FORESITE project contributes to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and South Sudan country level strategies in building resilience and addressing food insecurity among targeted communities. The project directly contributes to SDG number 2 (Zero Hunger) and number 5 (Gender Equality). Of all the SDGs, the South Sudan Government has prioritised achievement of SDG number 2, to which the project has made significant contributions. Project interventions aimed at improving food security and resilience and reducing gender inequalities directly contribute to the two SDGs. At country level, FORESITE directly contributes to South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2021's strategic objective number three of enabling vulnerable people to recover from crisis, seek solutions to displacement in respect of their rights, and build resilience to shocks and stresses (UNOCHA, 2021). The project also contributes WFP's strategy objective for Food-insecure people in targeted areas and food systems have increased resilience to shocks by 2024 (WFP, 2018). Additionally, the project also contributes to UN FAO's South Sudan Resilience Strategy outcome of closing the food gap (FAO, 2019). Overall, the project is strategically aligned to national priorities and efforts for building resilience among communities in South Sudan. Project relevance is further validated through the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification for October 2020 to July 2021 results. According to the IPC, Gogrial and Gogrial East Counties belong to emergency classification while Jur River and Twic counties are classified as crisis. The project location is suitable for FORESITE project implementation and remains relevant.

b) Response to Beneficiary needs

The mid-term evaluation assessed the extent to which the project addressed key problems affecting households and community. The findings revealed that, 82.6% of beneficiaries affirmed that the project addressed key problems while 17.4% did not. In addition, more male project beneficiaries affirmed that the project addressed problems than their female counterparts (Male=84.9%, Female=80.8%). Analysis by

project partner revealed that AVSI had the highest percentage of beneficiaries who affirmed that the project addressed their problems than other partners (AVSI=97.5%, NRC=81.8%, WVSS=71.5%). Furthermore, the findings by state of project beneficiaries indicated that Lakes states had more project beneficiaries who acknowledged that the project addressed their needs than other states (Lakes=97.5%, Western Bahr el Ghazal=87.4%, Warrap=72.7%). Similarly, the qualitative findings showed that the project responded to beneficiary needs as illustrated below:

*Yes, the project addressed my problems such as low income. Due to growing of ground nuts given to us by the project, I harvested and sold some which I used for buying a goat. By then I was the poorest man but since I joined the project my life has changed. Now I am able to send my children to school, feed my children by use of food I grew due to the project **(SGD with Group Farmer leaders)**.*

*The project has addressed the main challenge of food security and S4T. Due to participation in the project we now have food and know how to save money **(SGD with the youth)**.*

*FORESIT has done a lot for us like S4T initially people did not know how to save but now they know how to save. Whenever they get money, they save it. Among those who are unable to save money after every two weeks, when they get money they still save. Like the recent distribution of Cash for assets money by NRC members saved with S4T **(KII with S4T group leader)**.*

*The project has united us and we work as a group. Since the project started, there is togetherness among project beneficiaries. The project trained us in farming, how to coexist, to address our own problems/ challenges, how to do farming as business, to ensure that money is kept safe by not opening the saving box if three leaders are not present **(KII with S4T leaders)**.*

*The project has helped us because initially we never had ploughs but when the project was brought we formed a group and we were given four ploughs but with condition of paying 50% of the money and project paid 50% for us **(SGD with farmers)**.*

*Before I could have a lot of money but I did not know how to use it but when the project came I have been saving and other members have been saving too with our S4T. We save 2000 SSP per week. We were trained on how to do business **(SGD with Farmer Group Leaders)**.*

c) Adaptation to context and emerging Beneficiary needs and priorities

The major changes in the context were outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and continued occurrence of periodical flooding during rainy seasons. The project advised the project beneficiaries including the staff to adhere to standard operating procedure as recommended by WHO and Ministry of Health. This enabled the project beneficiaries and staff to continue with implementation of the project activities without disruption. In addition to this, the project advised the farmers to do early planting of the crops so that the effect of flooding is minimized. Furthermore, the beneficiary needs and priority have not changed. This is the reason as to why the project design has not been adjusted/changed.

3.5 Project Implementation Process

During the mid-term evaluation, the implementation process was assessed. This was assessed basing on quality of implementation, fund availability, stakeholder collaboration and impact on coordination of logistics and project coverage/reach and beneficiary satisfaction with project outputs. The findings on each of these have been presented hereunder:

a) Quality of Implementation. The project ensured high quality implementation through innovations that were put in place to ensure achievement of project outcomes. These innovations include a consortium approach. The consortium approach involved bringing partners with strong areas of specialities on board. For example, partners such as AVSI are specialists in peace and provide leadership

in peace intervention and World Vision is a specialist in agronomy component. NRC on the other hand brings on board special competences in TVET, ICLA and HLP. Implementation approach such as use of group farming and creation of other groups such as S4T, peace club, development committees and seed multiplication strategy has promoted quality of the implementation of the project.

b) Fund Availability

The funds for the project have been availed by European Union to World Vision South Sudan in time for implementation of project activities. World Vision South Sudan in turn remitted funds to partners in time for implementation of project activities. The funds that were availed by EU was considered adequate in line with the project activities since there were no major changes in design and prices of project inputs.

c) Stakeholder Collaboration and Impact on Coordination of Logistics

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project is collaborating with different stakeholders and how the collaboration has contributed to efficient and timely coordination of logistic activities and processes. Accordingly, the mid-term evaluation findings revealed that the project is collaborating with project partners/consortium members (WVSS, NRC and AVSI). In addition, the project is collaborating with line ministry in agriculture department and county agriculture departments. Due to this collaboration, there is procuring and distribution of project inputs such as seeds, ox ploughs and rakes. This has resulted into efficient and effective coordination of the logistics. These findings above have been further illustrated.

Different consortium members come together and discuss on various issues in relation to the project including; what does our plan look like let's say for the week (KII with project staff)

Every two months we choose who will strategically discuss in terms of the project challenges and how we are progressing (KII with project staff.)

The FORESITE project is working together with other sister counter parts including government counter parts in the sense that if you look at the food security or the cluster meetings, findings are shared that is of progress, challenges and ways forward (KII with project staff).

Let's talk about extension services, we actually coordinate with line ministry in agriculture department and country agriculture departments where they have to assign some of the stuff to support some of our farmers in terms of extension services (KII with project staff).

The design of FORESITE project is designed in a way that there are three groups, there is the steering committee that comprises of directors of different organizations that is, World Vision, NRC and AVSI, we always meets every month to understand the progress of the activities and this gives projection of how the FORESITE project is being implemented in terms of challenges and achievements (KII with project staff).

d) Project Coverage/Reach

The project has reached 21,826 rural smallholders as indicated in the project document. In addition, the project is implemented in four counties of Cueibet, Gogrial East, Twic and Jur River in three states of Lakes, Warrap and Western Bahr el Ghazal. Besides this, the project is being implemented in 24 Bomas and in 14 Payams as indicated in the project document. Based on characteristics of beneficiaries in the MTE data set, the following categories of vulnerable households and individual beneficiaries were being reached:

- 55% of beneficiaries were female while 45% were male
- 10.9% of beneficiaries were either widowed, married, single divorced or separated.
- 3.2% were disabled

- 27.1% were from female headed households
- 72.6% never attained any formal education.
- 84.3% were small holder farmers
- 12% were landless
- 5% were IDPs/returnee households

The different categories of FORESITE beneficiaries can be described as being vulnerable households. These beneficiary categories fit within the basic beneficiary selection criteria of FORESITE project nature. In this context, the project has an appropriate coverage and reach of beneficiaries.

e) Beneficiary Satisfaction with Project Outputs

The mid-term evaluation assessed the extent to which the beneficiaries were satisfied with project outputs. Overall, 92.9% of the project beneficiaries were satisfied with project outputs while 7.1% were not. The analysis revealed that, NRC had the highest percentage of beneficiaries who were satisfied with project outputs (NRC=95.7% WVSS=93.1% AVSI=90%). Analysis of findings by states of respondents indicated that Western Bahr el Ghazal had more beneficiaries who were satisfied with project outputs than others states (Western Bahr el Ghazal=96.6%, Warrap=93.6%, Lakes=90.0%). The findings by sex of respondents showed that, female project beneficiaries were slightly more satisfied with project outputs than their male counterparts (Female=93.0%, Male=92.8%). Among those who were satisfied with the project outputs, most of them were satisfied with seeds/ox plough (72.7%). This was followed by those satisfied with S4T (67.7%), training (61.3%), agricultural extension services (33.0%), farmer group and learning (40.2%) and IGA support (23.6%). The high level of satisfaction with project outputs was further validated through feedback from participants in FGDs and Key Informant interviews below:

I would give the project 100% because; our lives have changed because we earn money and trained on how to work (KII with S4T leaders).

I would rate the relevance of the project at 100% due to the training we got from it. For example, some members from our payam were taken to TVET centre for training in bakery and tailoring. At the end of training each member shall be given a startup kit and start their own businesses (KII with S4T leaders).

The project is good before group members could not manage to open up a big piece of land for farming but since the project came most of them can cultivate large piece of land for farming because of the ox ploughs which we got from the project and also members can borrow money and hire ox ploughs or tractor to open up land for farming (SGD with Farmer Group Leaders).

Beneficiaries who were not satisfied with quality of services offered by the project advanced different reasons. The most widely mentioned reason was inadequate matching fund for S4T. Other reasons included: delayed delivery of inputs; insufficient inputs in comparison to the size of farmer groups and limited training period for farmers.

f. Timeliness of the Design

During the midterm evaluation, the extent to which the project responded to the needs on the ground was examined. At the design of the project, the targeted beneficiaries experienced different problems such as food insecurity, lack of income generating activities, natural disasters such as flooding and conflicts. Based on this, the project designed interventions to respond to problems faced by the targeted project beneficiaries.

3.6 Project Learning

a. Mechanisms for Tracking Implementation

The consortium has established different frameworks, processes and strategies to track project implementation. These frameworks include fully developed logical frameworks as part of initial grant application; development of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) plan; adoption of an Indicator Tracking Table (ITT), preparation of uniform M&E Data Collection Tools; regular PDM surveys, collection of Most Significant Change (MSC) stories, establishment of a MEAL Technical Working Group, planning for project MTE and capturing of documents in the CIS. The examination of different strategies revealed that they were developed and regularly used. For example, the ITT was fully populated with up to date information on project outputs (planned versus actual). In addition, the logical framework was fully populated with all indicators with corresponding targets for both outcomes/results and outputs. All output indicators had been updated with information on output targets, actual outputs and achievement level showing progress indicated. The existing mechanisms for monitoring the project were sufficient. However, monitoring was mainly output based, with the only results monitoring limited to documentation of MSC stories. Interviews with the Project Team revealed that they had not undertaken results monitoring since the MTE was planned in year two and would serve this purpose.

b. Approaches to Generation of Learning

The consortium adopted and used different approaches to generate learning from implementation of the project. The different approaches included:

- Documentation of the Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories with focus on unique positive results emerging from project activities. Since the start of the project, around 14 success stories had been published and disseminated to the donor and some of them posted on WV SS websites and social media platforms.
- Field Monitoring/experience through sharing visits involving field teams across organisations
- Holding of project review meetings which review progress and emerging issues and lessons learnt
- Commissioning of special surveys such as market assessments, PDM, post-harvest monitoring surveys and individual activity performance surveys (S4T health performance survey)
- Holding Project Management Unit meetings every two months to discuss issues in terms of challenges or opportunities as well as key learnings and cascade those learnings within the consortium.
- Holding monthly MEAL Technical Group meetings to study findings and emerging issues for learning and project implementation improvement.

The approaches were sound as they supported the generation of valuable information and learning within the consortium. From reports and minutes from different approaches, valuable actions were identified and implemented to improve project performance. In addition, products such as MSC stories are shared within the food security clusters and the rest of the humanitarian community via social media (Facebook and Twitter).

c. Lessons Learnt and Contribution to Improving Project Performance

From project implementation, some lessons have emerged. These lessons are centred on project approaches specified in the design and how they actually evolved during implementation.

- Cost sharing: Cost sharing in provision of inputs to communities is a good approach for shifting communities from humanitarian (hand-outs) to recovery phase (self-help) for communities in recovering from emergency contexts. Initially, the cost sharing was not well appreciated by farmers. However, after providing 57 ploughs on cost sharing in year one, the demand shot up to over 400 ploughs in the second year. This represents a seven fold increase between the two years, which is a good indicator of shifting attitudes towards empowerment and self-help model in development as well as pathway to sustainability.

- Market Approach to access to inputs: Facilitating the establishment of agri-inputs dealers at county levels helps not only to introduce market based approach to agricultural inputs marketing, but also increase availability of vital goods and services to smallholder farmers.
- Contract farming provides good opportunity for commercialisation of farming in South Sudan. The linking of agro-input dealers (seed dealers) to farmers involved in large scale cultivation of crops for seeds creates a very strategic business link and addresses the missing link between production and marketing in the value chain.
- Saving for Transformation (S4T) works as a good avenue for mobilising micro-credit and stimulating initiation of micro-businesses in targeted communities. This effectiveness is powered by access to income through cash for work projects (FMNR) which enable individual farmers to save funds in the group, pool savings in a bigger loan fund and enable access to micro-loans to undertake businesses. S4T is helpful in addressing the constraints of access to capital which hinders individuals from investing in businesses for income generation.
- Consortium approach works well if partners are mature and experienced organisation and add value to each other during implementation of joint projects.
- So far, Cash for Work is proving to be a good incentive for conserving environment using the FMNR approach. The cash incentive works as a motivator for farmers to conserve the environment.
- Peace clubs reduce conflicts in communities. Youth-led Peace clubs in cattle camps help in mediating conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers.

3.7 Complementarity and Harmonization

The evaluation assessed whether there is complementarity and integration between FORESITE project and other EU funded interventions in project locations. This complementarity eliminates duplication and also increases the chances of the project having significant impact in targeted communities and institutions. The complementarity is in terms of collaboration on activities as well as using existing assets (social investments built by previous projects to implement new interventions). Overall, MTE investigations revealed mixed situations on this aspect of analysis. While NRC had deliberately undertaken efforts to collaborate with other EU partners; WVSS was just beginning the process of collaboration and AVSI had no collaboration with any EU partners operating in Cueibet County. While WVSS had previously implemented EU funded Food Security Thematic Programme in Twic, such experiences were not used to inform FORESITE project implementation and sustainability efforts. However, there were deliberate efforts to use results and contributions of previous EU funded project to implement FORESITE and make it more effective in NRC area. NRC had deliberate, strong and extensive collaboration efforts with current EU partners and was using previous EU project created community assets to implement the project. The collaboration entailed:

- Complementing Hope Agency for Relief and Development (HARD) activities on food security in Jur River;
- Working with VSO/EMPOWER to build skills of beneficiaries on Kangi Payam, Jur River County. The project is working with previous beneficiaries to embark on commercial farming through provision of inputs.
- Supporting vulnerable mothers initially targeted by Maltese International to enrol into S4T and mother garden initiatives.
- Taking beneficiaries for value addition training at UNIDO centre at Ayein, Twic County.
- Using FAO demonstration sites as learning spaces for project beneficiaries on agronomic practices.
- Receiving technical guidance on vocational skilling in rural context from previously EU funded EMPOWER under NRC

- Targeting households and farmers located within catchment of EU funded feeder roads to connect farmers to markets in Kangi (Jur River County) and Ayien (Twic County), constructed by UNOPS.

WVSS was in the process of finalising the terms of reference for creation of a coordination platform for EU funded projects between VSF Germany operating in Gogrial East and WVSS. The intent of this platform is to facilitate learning between partners and improve effectiveness of EU funded interventions in the same locations/regions. WVSS had also made use of existing assets left behind by previous EU funded projects in Gogrial East. The project targeted communities located within the area served by a road constructed by UNOPS. The WV FORESITE Team has however benefited from internal learning from other WVSS projects such as Building Resilience through Asset Creation and Enhancement II Project (DFID funded), Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversity Project funded by the Government of Canada (GAC), and Greater Resilience through Enhancing Agriculture and Nutrition Project (funded by DFAT). The internal learning has contributed to efficient procurement of inputs and services, documentation of most significant change stories and improvement in the project management.

The evaluation however noted no evidence of AVSI collaborating with any existing EU partners in Cueibet or using assets created by previous EU project in Cueibet. Interviews with staff indicated that there was no other EU funded project being implemented in Cueibet. However, NPA works in Cueibet and has previously implemented activities using EU Grants.

Overall, the collaboration with other EU partner is not systematic and well managed, though there are some efforts to start a coordination platform. This should have been considered at project inception. WVSS and AVSI can take cue from NRC approach.

3.8 Project Visibility

The evaluation assessed the measures taken by consortium members to create project visibility towards Government line ministries and other INGOs working in South Sudan and project locations. This assessment also entailed determining whether the EU emblem and partners' logo were visible at project sites. Overall, the project has a very effective visibility plan demonstrating the presence of the project and its contributions towards addressing resilience in targeted communities. Specific findings include:

- The project procured 130 sign posts (AVSI=47; NRC=49; WVSS=34) with EU emblem and logos of consortium members. The sign posts were meant for erection at key project activity sites such S4T, mother gardens, farmer groups, including adaptive trial sites, TVET centres, peace development committees and FMNR sites. The 130 sign posts were distributed to different sites. At the time of the evaluation most signposts had been erected at different sites. The evaluation team confirmed existence of signposts in the community at project sites through physical observations. Indeed this was validated by 90% of respondents who indicated there were signposts at critical project activity sites. The analysis revealed that 98.4% of NRC, 94.6% of WVSS and 75.8% of AVSI project area targeted beneficiaries affirmed existence of such signposts at project activity sites in the community.
- The project also designed and produced banners which were displaced at every event where project activities were being implemented. The banners had the project name, activity being carried, EU emblem and logos of consortium members. The banners are distributed at training and meeting venues and any activity implemented in the community.
- All publications by the project had to bear the EU emblem and partners' logo to give visibility to the project, EU and partners.



- Other materials such as T-shirts were designed, procured and distributed to community members and key partners such as beneficiaries of Peace Clubs, TVET trainees, S4T leaders and other community partners.
- Updates of significant activities such as MSC and major activities such as distribution of ploughs, graduation of TVET trainees are often posted to WVSS twitter handle and Facebook page.

Overall, the project visibility strategy was elaborate and effective in ensuring that FORESITE Project is known in terms of its contribution to resilience building efforts in South Sudan. The project also has given the face to EU and consortium members in the community and at national level.

3.9 Sustainability of Project Results

The MTE identified different sustainability measures embedded in design, how they have worked out (signs of sustainability) and any threats to sustainability of project results. The project design specified different strategies aimed at sustaining project impact, outcomes and services. The strategies were to contribute building long term sustainability of benefits from the project beyond receipt of services and benefits after closure of the project. Specified measures covered aspects of financial, institutional, policy-level, and environmental sustainability. The evaluation therefore sought to document emerging signs of sustainability within the context of the different specified and observed sustainability measures that emerged during project implementation. These findings are categorised as emerging signs of sustainability of project benefits. So far, the following positive signs of sustainability of project results were documented during the MTE:

a. Financial Sustainability

The project has strengthened the market system by linking agro-input dealers to farmer groups to access different inputs in close proximity of their households at county level. This enabled farmers to access agro-inputs within a manageable distance. Instead of farmers buying agro-inputs from major commercial centres (Wau or Rumbek), which are not easily accessible due to distance and transport challenges, agro-input dealers have established outlets in each county targeted by the project. These dealers attend to demand for agro-inputs from farmers at county level. As long as demand for agro-input continues to increase, the agro-input dealers will continue operations beyond the project. The thriving agro-input business will also attract more dealers in the local markets to benefit an increased number of farmers demanding for such inputs. The continued supply of agro-input to farmers is evidenced by the resolve of the agro-dealers to continue meeting demand from farmers as indicated below:

I have spare parts of the ox ploughs and if any farmer group is in need of it to use for the repair of the ox plough at a given price are available.

I want to establish a good relationship with the farmers because they are now my customers and I will continue supplying them with spare parts.

I have also brought these spare parts closer to them other than travelling to Kuajok.

*As far as cost sharing is concerned, the farmers have known the importance of cost sharing and with time they will start paying 100% **(KII with Agro Input Dealer)**.*

Cost recovery approach to supporting farmers' access to inputs has been gradually embraced and accelerated towards end of the second year of the project. This signals a significant shift in attitudes from farmers getting free inputs (aid) to farmers buying or contributing to input purchase. In year 1, only 57 ploughs were purchased by farmers on cost recovery basis. This increased to 400 ploughs in year 2, implying that farmers are starting to take charge of purchasing their own inputs. The slow uptake of cost-shared items in year one could have been predicted if a willingness to cost share was conducted by the

project to determine which items and to which level of cost sharing can be afforded by targeted households.

There was an appreciation of benefits of cost-shared ox-ploughs in supporting farmer groups and individual farmers to open larger chunks of farmer land for crop growing. With improved crop productivity and performance, farmers appreciate and seek to purchase their own inputs. This observation is backed by verbatim quotes below:

Cost sharing is good and it has helped us enough, changed our minds. Initially we were using traditional method which would delay in terms of how much land to open but now we are able to open more land in a short period of time (SGD with Farmer group leaders).

Cost sharing has been good and we now know the suppliers of the ox ploughs and we shall be buying these ox ploughs from these suppliers (SGD with Farmer group leaders).

As groups we contributed money and paid for cost sharing. If it was individual, it was not affordable but as a group it's manageable. After cultivating the group farm, we do individual farming/ cultivation and after we hire out the ox plough and earn money (SGD with Farmers).

The project was strengthening local seed production which addresses one of the constraints in the agriculture value chain. The project linked an agro-input dealer to farmer groups to purchase seeds grown by farmers. A contract has been signed between some farmer groups growing 50 *feddans* groundnuts in Jur River County and PRO Seed Company in Juba the agro-input dealer in Wau. The contract farming approach entered between the seed multiplication groups and PRO Seed Company Ltd serves as a strategy to introduce commercial farming [farming as a business] and ensure market linkages, as the company will procure the produce of the groups at a better price. This agreement had been captured and formalised through a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Seed company and farmer groups.

b. Institutional sustainability

The project has integrated different projects to enable beneficiaries have access to a given package of activities and inputs. The analysis revealed that 21.5% of the beneficiaries belonged to more than one beneficiary group. Further analysis revealed that 44.7% belonged to farmer group only; 25.6% belonged to S4T groups only; 18% belonged to both farmer groups and S4T; 8.2% belonged to mother garden groups and 3.5% belonged to both mother garden and S4T groups. This integration is catalyst for generation and sustainability of project impact which addresses different challenges and in turn creates more and diverse impact at farmer level. In addition, all farmer groups belonged to at least one group as key project delivery approach.

The project has trained different Government workers and local community leaders on agronomic practices, saving for transformation, peace building and conflict resolution, ICLA, HLP to give them orientation on different areas and also build their capacity to effectively monitor and even facilitate different processes. Government officials and local community leaders such as Payam administrators, agriculture extension workers and local chiefs have been capacitated on different areas. The skills currently enable trained stakeholders to execute their mandates even in the absence of the project.

The project supported farmers to form 126 farmer groups and trained lead farmers from each group to support other farmers. Lead farmers are community based and will continue being resourceful to fellow farmers after project termination.

The project supports 72 S4T groups (WVSS=32; NRC=22 & AVSI=18) which are engaged in mobilisation of savings and extension of credit beneficiaries (AVSI, NRC & WVSS, 2021/05). The project trained these

groups on savings mobilisation and credit management, group dynamics and supported with necessary start-up kits. MTE Beneficiary survey results revealed that 70.2% of the beneficiaries had attended a savings for transformation training. From the health check report in May 2021, the S4T groups had a cumulative savings of SSP 16,388,711 SSP (USD 27,314); loan portfolio of SSP 10,462,000 (USD 17,436) and cumulative social funds worth SSP 958,800 (USD 1,598). S4T have significantly contributed to supporting the economic transformation of individual group members. For example, 554 were established from S4T loans, 194 persons have been employed by S4T; 141 school going children have been supported, 240 people supported on health and 212 loans have been offered for food purchase. Overall, the S4T groups were performing well and will continue even after the project has terminated due to value they create among members. As per the project survey, 75% of the loans were always paid in time. This is considered healthy given the fact that S4T are informal rural micro-credit and savings schemes. In addition, there is a great appreciation of S4T within the community. Primary beneficiaries reported:

Through S4T training, we have got knowledge which we shall continue using. Activities such as working as a group shall continue because now we have learnt how good it is to work as a group. As a group of farming and S4T we give out loans with interest and we plan to continue lending money to members and other community members who are interested (SGD with farmers).

I personally I have bought 5 goats and 3 hens, I have a garden of sorghum and ground nuts and I have all this because of being a project beneficiary. I participated in group farming of 28 members created by the project and we cultivated 28 feddans. Each member was given one feddan of ground nuts. I sold my ground nuts I got from my feddan and used money for starting business in the market. The business has generated profits which I used for buying 5 goats and 3 hens (SGD with the youth).

The project supported the formation of 24 peace committees and 30 youth lead peace clubs in cattle camps and trained them on peace building and conflict resolution. The peace committees have been at the fore-front of resolving conflicts between and within communities.

There is an established coordination and networking mechanism between community groups and government structures at Boma, Payam and County level on different initiative's such as peace committee activities.

c. Policy Level

The project has contributed to development of guidelines and implementation of policies at community level. For example, the project seconded its agronomist for technical advice and participation in the preparation of Crop Production and Livestock Production Extension Guides funded by the EU for broader use by development agencies working in the agriculture and livestock sector in South Sudan. It also funded and distributed 1700 copies of the same guides to different stakeholders in project locations.

Additionally, the project contributed to implementation of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights through training traditional court leaders on HLP and an enabling them to minimise bias against women in property right disputes. So far, there is evidence that the training is starting to bear fruits by traditional court leaders passing favourable judgments for women. It also contribute to strengthening the private sector involvement in seed supply through creating linkages between farmer groups producing crops for seeds and seed suppliers. The project has targeted more women and ensured Persons with Disabilities are deliberately targeted to make the project more inclusive. FMNR activities have contributed to implementation of Government environment policy.

The project has strengthened and revived statutory community structures (Boma Development Committees). The project revived and trained 24 Boma Development Committees on the project accountability mechanism and worked with structures such as Accountability to Affected Populations

Committees. The committees receive, document and forward any complaints to the project for resolution.

d. Environmental Sustainability

The project facilitated a community based participatory planning initiate a conversation within communities featuring vulnerability and food insecurity as key issues that needs to be addressed. Then participatory planning process has enabled communities to identify the key drivers of environmental degradation and reached a community based locally appropriate solution on how to mitigate the problem. According to project records, the CBPP exercise culminated by helping participants to draw community mapping and vulnerability profiling to explore and plot geographic boundaries, current landforms and uses, degradation features, areas of greatest shock, and basic community infrastructures. At the end of the training, participants have identified degraded areas in the community where farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) can be applied. Accordingly, supported 20 FMNR sites projects which are contributing to environmental conservation. Beneficiaries have worked under the cash for assets arrangement to establish and maintain FMNR sites where trees are preserved and not cut. In addition, farmers have extended the same approach to their own farm land clearances where some trees are preserved to contribute to conservation of the environment.

e. Threats to Sustainability

S4T were threatened by surplus agricultural produce (vegetable crops) which debases demand and contributed to reduced prices and less farm income. The groups were also threatened by potential losses from businesses where loans are invested and the national currency depreciates which depletes the value of savings and loan values.

The S4T groups continue to perform well in mobilising savings. To avoid stagnation and achieve greater impact, groups which are performing well can be supported to form Savings and credit cooperatives or be linked to formal banking institutions which are willing to extend credit to such groups.

Overall, the project approach to increasing income generation can be strengthened through providing financial literacy training to beneficiaries. Beneficiaries participating in cash for work activities and those seeking micro-credit for micro businesses can benefit from such trainings.

Groups could benefit more from vegetable production. However, groups produced low volumes of different varieties of vegetables. Benefiting from available market requires focusing on a few high-demand vegetables for maximising profits. The low volume of production increases marketing costs as compared to large production volumes which can be aggregated for sale in bigger markets around production centres.

The project just needs to follow through all sustainability measures specified in the proposal. In addition, an exit strategy should be developed to guide the phase-out of different forms of support and eventual close of the project after the 44 months of implementation. An exit strategy will harmonise sustainability approaches and prepare beneficiaries for eventual termination of the project while guaranteeing continuity of benefits.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

a. Progress towards Strengthening Resilience

There is sufficient evidence showing that the FORESITE project is strengthening objective resilience among targeted communities. The overall assessment shows overwhelming improvement in elements of objective resilience such as food production and consumption and income generation. The project has contributed to increased food production among targeted crops (sorghum and groundnuts). The sorghum production has almost doubled (178% increase in volume of sorghum produced) and groundnut production has also registered very significant improvements (74% increase) as compared to the baseline. In addition, the household incomes (US\$) increased by 78% in comparison to the baseline. Measured by food consumption score, the food security has greatly improved as only 28.8% of households at MTE were in moderate or severe food insecurity compared to 51.9% at baseline. These are very good signs of achieving objective resilience. However, achieving subjective resilience has not yet progressed well. As measured by the Subjectively Evaluated Resilience Score, the situation has somewhat regressed compared to the baseline. The perceptions about resilience have reduced. Households feel they do not have sufficient forms of capacity that can support them to recover from different shocks and challenges. As measured by the SERS, there has been a reduction in this capacity. This indicator as framed depends on the mind frame/feelings of respondents at the time of the interview. Accordingly, any circumstances which create doubts on household capacity to handle shocks will lead to negative feedback as documented in the MTE. In addition, the project approach of emphasising self-reliance and moving away from relief/aid or provision of handouts is aimed at creating such capacity. This approach has gained traction as indicated in more beneficiaries who are willing to cost-share the purchase of ploughs. The appreciation for approaches of self-reliance interventions and moving away from free or emergency support will take time to change.

b. Progress towards Project Outcomes

There is good progress towards achievement of project specific objectives and outcomes. The progress is mixed as some outcomes are on course to be achieved while others need reviewing and rethinking on the strategy to achieve better results. The project being at mid-term, the expectation is that at least 50% of the targets should have been achieved. Results indicated that nine out of 14 outcome targets have achievement rates greater than 50%. In fact, 36% of the targets were achieved. This is commendable progress. However, some three targets were under threat of not being achieved (SERS, gender attitudes and conflict). A comparison across the specific objectives and outcomes revealed that two out of the three specific objective targets were progressing well towards desired improvement levels while one area was lagging behind (SERS). From the specific objective targets, there is a tremendous reduction in food insecurity as measured by the food consumption score and copings strategy index. The increased food production and increased household incomes have directly contributed to this improvement. Increased food production contributes to increased incomes. Both improved food production and incomes directly contribute to increased access to food either through own production or purchase from markets.

The progress towards project outcomes was mixed, with two out of three outcomes on track while one was below 50%. In their order of performance, outcome 3 ranks topmost, followed by outcome 2 and outcome 1. Progress towards outcome 3 (improved and resilient food security and income especially for women and youth) is on track. All targets for this outcome were more than 50% achieved (lowest is 73%). All outcome three targets have a strong likelihood of being achieved. Progress towards outcome 2 (Increased anticipatory, absorptive, and adaptive capacity with respect to climate change and disruptive events including natural disasters and conflict) was achieved. The achievement rate at mid-term was on borderline (50%). Progress towards outcome 1 (Reduced barriers to engagement in resilience building, food security and income generating activities, especially for women and youth) was very slow as only

33% of the targets have been achieved at mid-term. Slow progress towards outcome targets was mainly on indicators measuring intangible aspects of change (gender attitudes, conflict occurrence and subjective resilience). In spite of heavy investment in changing gender perceptions, the change in this area is slow. Overall, the enshrined patriarchal attitudes towards women and gender bias cannot be changed in a short term. It requires time for these to happen. In the short term, making project outcomes gender inclusive is more achievable than changing gender attitudes within the community. Additionally, conflict remains a very fragile asset and can disappear due to one small event. What is encouraging however is that Cueibet County registered significant reduction in households reporting occurrence of conflict in community linked to project interventions (peace committees and dialogue meetings). While the percentage of households reporting conflict in counties of Jur River and Gogrial East remain low, more attention is needed in Twic which regressed on this indicator. The project has concentrated efforts on building capacity for community to resolve conflicts within their own communities, some of the conflicts such as cattle raiding are between targeted communities and communities from other States or counties. An intervention on one side of the conflict without addressing all conflicting parties cannot lead to reduction in conflict if it is instigated from external actors.

c. Project Implementation

The three consortium partners (AVSI, NRC and WVSS) have implemented the project well. More than 72% of 25 set output targets of the project have achievement rate of at least 50%. More than one-third (36%) of all outputs were fully delivered (100% complete). All outputs for outcome two are above 50% of set targets, followed by Outcome 1 with 71% and output 3 with 58% of the outputs being at least 50% achieved. While outcome three is the least in terms of delivery of outputs, it has the highest number of outputs (12 outputs) compared to seven targets for output 1 and six targets for output 2. In comparison, there has been very good level of implementation for Outcome 3. This partly explains the very impressive performance of output three in comparison to other two outcomes. In addition, the three outputs under Outcome 3 had zero achievement/completion rates as they were planned for the third year of the project. Such outputs included collective selling of produce by groups; assuring farmer produced seeds, ploughing master trainer and ploughing master service provider and private sector extension agents/sales agents commissioned by input dealers. These activities were more suited for implementation after increasing crop production and setting up different systems. This was only possible for implementation from the third year onwards.

d. Plausibility of the FORESITE Theory of Change

The FORESITE theory of change is well articulated by the project. It specifies different pathways for achievement of impact. There is a casual link between different elements of the project (from inputs, to outputs, involvement of stakeholders and generation of outcomes and impact. The emergent theory based on MTE findings show that the pathway leading to improved food security and incomes is happening with very strong evidence. There is some improvement in governance and conflict prevention mechanism in targeted communities. Communities are more cohesive, knowledgeable and use early warning system to reduce disaster risks. However, improved resilience attitudes are not being generated in the manner anticipated in the design. Overall, desired change effect is happening at different rates across the three pathways. FORESITE is having significant programmatic effects around food security and incomes. These areas have large effect sizes. Other areas have small to very small effect sizes, showing the slowness in changes being created by project interventions.

In addition, most assumptions underpinning FORESITE were well specified and continue to hold during project implementation. For example, the security situation remained stable; there were no major influx of IDPs in target locations and there was a very constructive engagement with government structures in project locations. However, the assumption that no major conflict or natural disaster affects project implementation did not hold as all locations except Cueibet reported increased occurrence of conflicts.

In addition, the theory of change omitted one key assumption and risk which needed mitigation measures. There is no assumption on economic environment in South Sudan. Extreme hyperinflation and depreciation of the local currency during project implementation continued to deplete the real value of VSLA savings and loans. Capitalised business owners have suffered from losses due to price fluctuations. In addition, while emphasis of VCD is meant to address all marketing issues, farmer and demonstration gardens report low demand of produce in their location.

e. Project Efficiency

To a great extent, the FORESITE project is efficient both in cost minimization and resource optimization, existing opportunities to reach more beneficiaries and project design. The project has promoted efficiency through use of approaches such as cost sharing and seed multiplication which have minimized costs and maximized resources. The project has also utilised available opportunity of people willing to join the project, good working relationship with government officials such as county officials, chiefs and Payam administrators and also willingness to share costs among project beneficiaries where they pay 50% and the project pay 50%. In terms of the project design, there are no changes on the initial design that was approved by the donor. The project is being implemented by the consortium of three members (WVSS, NRC, AVSI) and also the project interventions (activities as indicated in the proposal have not been altered.

f. Project Relevance/Impact

The FORESITE project is relevant and 82.6% of beneficiaries rated it as relevant. It is because FORESITE project addressed needs/problems of the targeted project beneficiaries. The FORESITE project is addressing different needs. The project addressed food security needs through provision of agricultural inputs such as ox-ploughs, seeds (sorghum and ground nuts) and training. The project also addressed income generating needs through business training, provision of inputs needed for income generation. Project beneficiaries who participated in mother gardens were provided with these inputs needed for income generation and trained in farming as a business. They are engaged in production of vegetable for sale and home consumption. In addition, the project is also addressing barriers to engagement in resilience building through implementation of peace and gender interventions. The project is also addressing social cohesion needs through implementation of group based interventions (farming and S4T as a group) and also advocacy for coexistence among project and non-project beneficiaries. Furthermore, the emergencies or disaster have been addressed through developing Early Warning Systems and creation of awareness on what to do in case of an emergency or disaster.

The project also adapted to the context and emerging beneficiary needs and priorities. The project strategy in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic was appropriate and enabled the project to successfully implement activities with minimum interruptions.

g. Inclusiveness

The project is generally inclusive in its processes and outcomes. FORESITE implementation approaches had made deliberate efforts to ensure that marginalised groups are included in its activities. Vulnerable and marginalised groups such as women, persons with disabilities and youth are included in project activities. Project results as reflected in outcome targets are inclusive. Female beneficiaries have benefited from different interventions as reflected in areas where positive changes have occurred. The similar situation has happened to persons with disabilities and youth. Accordingly, the different gender sensitive approaches have engendered gender inclusive outcomes of the FORESITE projects.

h. Other observations

FORESITE implementation has been timely in terms of undertaking different interventions aimed at building long term resilience in the community. The consortium approach to implementation has largely

worked well as each organisation comes with unique competences in the consortium. Sustainability strategies have been implemented and there are emerging signs that project benefits will be achieved. There is strong visibility of EU and consortium partners during implementation of the project. There have been some attempts to collaborate and complement efforts of other on-going projects or even make use of assets left behind by previous EU funded projects in the areas to strengthen sustainability and create more impact in the community.

However, some areas require attention. Integration and complementing on-going or previous EU is not uniform across the three partners. While NRC had a deliberate effort to seeking this collaboration from inception, WV was just starting it and AVSI did not show indications of this collaboration. In addition, activity monitoring and some limited results monitoring have taken place but result monitoring based on outcome targets was not happening.

The evaluation also shows that a good number of outcome targets (6 out of 14 or 42%) have been achieved by the project at mid-term. This is a sign of good performance. Aside from effect sizes for improvements on outcome 3 (improved food security and incomes) targets which were large in size, other effect sizes were small or very small. Such improvements are laudable. Of course the project implementation has been of quality and the theory of change is well specified for these components. However, the desired level of improvement should be tagged to effect sizes. While the desired level of improvement on intervention effects can be statistically significant, it should also have a meaningful programmatic value to the organisation (bringing about meaningful and transformative changes). Consortium partners should make very well-reasoned and informed choices on desired level of improvement and their corresponding programmatic significance. In this was set targets will be justifiable in terms of resources invested in creating change within targeted communities.

4.2 Recommendations

There is need for consortium partners to review approaches being used to lead to cultivating positive gender attitudes among targeted beneficiaries and communities. A constant reflection is required on how negative gender attitudes and perceptions can be effectively influenced and changed to engender positive supportive environment for protection and empowerment of women in targeted communities. Lessons learnt around making traditional courts more supportive of women issues may be valuable in this reflection.

A: Overall Recommendations

1. The EU and consortium partners should focus on supporting or designing long term resilience building interventions in communities in South Sudan. Short term interventions build short term resilience which can easily be eroded shortly after project closure. Long term resilience can be achieved through protracted and long term and multi-year interventions within targeted communities. Long term and multi-year interventions will reach more beneficiaries and strengthen the sustainability of project results.
2. The consortium should review and adjust outcome indicator targets since some of them have been achieved. The revised targets can be achieved target averages for the mid-term to apply to both existing and new beneficiaries for the final years of the project.
3. All consortium partners should deliberately seek collaboration with existing EU partners and also identify and make use of assets and connections left behind by previous EU funded interventions in targeted communities.

4. It is recommended that consortium partners should carry out regular results monitoring with focus on specific objective and outcome indicator targets to gauge progress and take any corrective measures for better performance of the project by end of its lifespan.
5. In future projects, there is a need to set well-reasoned and informed outcome targets to match with efforts and resources involved. Special attention should be paid to desired effect sizes in comparison to the desired level of performance. Data will be required on intervention measures at inception in comparison to anticipated level of change, including corresponding levels of variations for continuous measures.
6. There is need to reflect on how the design of projects can cater for systematic evaluation of projects within World Vision. The phased approach to reaching beneficiaries used by FORESITE corresponds to a pipeline design approach where different cohorts of beneficiaries can work as treatment and comparison groups. This supports alternative approaches to estimation of project impact. This approach however will require beneficiary selection to be completed in the first year before conducting a baseline survey and followed through with mid-term and or final evaluations. In the event that few beneficiaries are selected in the first year, the population in the first year can be allocated to treatment and comparison groups. In this respect, the programme design and implementation will support proper estimation of the counterfactual and changes attributed to project implementation.

B: Recommendation for Outcome 1

1. There is need for consortium partners to review approaches being used to cultivate positive gender attitudes among targeted beneficiaries and communities. A constant reflection is required on how negative gender attitudes and perceptions can be effectively influenced and changed to engender positive supportive environment for protection and empowerment of women in targeted communities. Lessons learnt around making traditional courts more supportive of women issues may be valuable in this reflection.

C: Recommendation for Outcome 2

1. The project should continuously undertake a conflict mapping and scanning of communities to appropriately intervene and ensure that occurrence of conflicts is minimised. While small misunderstandings in the community may not affect large areas, they have a very high negative impact on perceptions about peace within the community.
2. In future interventions using cost-sharing approaches should carry out the willingness to cost share study to identify inputs farmers are willing to cost share, their level of contributions and modalities of paying. This will give an estimate of the willingness to pay and contribute to proper implementation strategy for piloting cost sharing within communities.
3. S4T should be integrated in all farmer groups. It is cardinal to the sustainability of the group and the overall resilience of the HH and communities.
4. S4T groups which have demonstrated proper management and performance in mobilisation of savings and credit management should be supported to graduate into savings and credit cooperatives and or link them to formal banking institutes to enable them have access to large loans.

D: Recommendation for Outcome 3

1. The project should partner with other agencies to provide brief economic updates to beneficiary groups to enable them take appropriate decisions regarding micro-borrowing, investment in micro-

businesses and minimise losses occasioned by hyperinflation and extremely high local depreciations against the US dollar.

2. The project should focus on few vegetable crops during dry seasons to meet local demand. Such vegetables can be aggregated for sale in bigger markets around production centres and contribute to increasing household incomes.
3. Overall, the project approach to increasing income generation can be strengthened through providing financial literacy training to beneficiaries. Beneficiaries participating in cash for work activities and those seeking micro-credit for micro businesses can benefit from such trainings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: A bridged Terms of Reference



Abridged ToR.docx

Appendix 2: FORESITE Mid-Term Evaluation Design Matrix/Plan



FORESITE
Evaluation Plan.doc

Appendix 3: Data Collection Tools



Beneficiary Survey
Questionnaire.docx



Qualitative Data
Collection Tools.doc

Appendix 4: Indicator Summary Sheet



Appendix 4 -
Indicator Summary S

Appendix 5: FORESITE Project Theory of Change



FORESITE Theory of
Change.docx

Appendix 6: Supplementary Information

Table A1: Percentage of Households that are fully resilient on different Domains of SERS

Domain	Baseline (N=1681)	MTE (N=1710)	Effect (Difference)
Adoptive Capacity	55.3%	44.7%	-10.6%
Transformative Capacity	77.1%	22.9%	-54.1%
Adaptive Capacity	72.7%	27.3%	-45.5%
Financial Capacity	63.3%	36.7%	-26.5%
Social Capacity	62.7%	37.3%	-25.3%
Political Capacity	51.5%	48.5%	-3.0%
Learning	67.1%	32.9%	-34.2%
Anticipatory Capacity	64.6%	35.4%	-29.3%
Early Warning	64.3%	35.7%	-28.5%

Appendix 7: Project Outcome Indicator Measurement Plan



2020-03-37-FORESIT
E Baseline Survey In